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A  
COMMENTARY  
ON THE  
BOOK OF PSALMS,

BY  
GEORGE HORNE, D.D.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY  
JAMES MONTGOMERY, ESQ.

AND MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THE LATE  
REV. WILLIAM JONES,  
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MDCCLXXXVI.

J.



A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

BOOK OF PSALMS.

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*Seventeenth Day.—Evening Prayer.*

PSALM LXXXIX.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm is appointed by the church to be read on Christmas-day. It celebrates, ver. 1—4. the mercies of God in Christ, promised to David; 5—13. the almighty power of Jehovah, manifested in his works and dispensations; 14. his justice, mercy, and truth; 15—18. the happiness and security of his people; 19—37. his covenant made with David, as the representative of Messiah, who should come of his seed; 38—45. the church lamenteth her distressful state, at the time when this Psalm was penned; <sup>1</sup> 46—51. she prayeth for the accomplishment of the promise; and, in the meantime, 52. blesseth Jehovah.

VERSE 1. *I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.*

The ‘mercies of Jehovah’ have ever employed the voices of believers to celebrate them. These

<sup>1</sup> Sedeciâ capto, domo David e solio deturbatâ, promissiones Dei irritas videri propheta queritur, necdum adesse Christum. —Bossuet. Dr. Kennicott imagines it to have been composed by Isaiah, as a solemn and public address to God, at the time when Rezin and Pekah were advancing against Jerusalem.

mercies were promises to the human race, in their great representative and surety, before the world began; 2 Tim. i. 9; Tit. i. 2; they were prefigured by ancient dispensations; and, in part, fulfilled, at the incarnation of Christ. The 'faithfulness' of God in so fulfilling them, is now 'made known,' by the holy services of the Christian church, 'to all generations.'

*2. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever; thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.*

Whatever be at any time the state of the church on earth, she knoweth that the foundation of God standeth sure; that the sacred edifice, raised thereon, will be incorruptible and eternal as 'heaven' itself, where only mercy and truth are to have their perfect work, in the everlasting felicity of the redeemed. Of this felicity, which is to be the consummation of God's promises and our hopes, we behold some faint resemblance as often as we view the stability, the beauty, and the glory of the visible material 'heavens.'

*3. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant; 4. Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations.*

The two former verses set forth a professing faith in God's mercy: these two assign the ground of such faith; namely, the covenant which he here introduced as declaring that he had made with David, and which he did make with him by the prophet Nathan. 2 Sam. vii. 12, &c. The covenant relates to David's 'seed,' and to the establishment of his throne in that seed; lit

Solomon for a time; spiritually, in Christ for ever. 'When thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son.' These last words are cited by the apostle, Heb. i. 5, as spoken of Christ, to evince his superiority over the angels. Yet, that the whole passage does, in the letter, relate to Solomon, can admit of no doubt, he being the 'seed' and immediate successor of David, and the person appointed to 'build an house for God's name.' Here then we have an incontestable proof, that the covenant with David had Messiah for its object; that Solomon was a figure of him; and that the Scripture hath sometimes a double sense.<sup>1</sup> It is moreover to be observed, that the covenants made with Abraham, David, &c. all had their original and foundation in the covenant made with Messiah, who was the true Father of the faithful, the beloved and chosen of God; the great Prophet, Priest, and King; the only person qualified to be a sponsor, and to engage in a covenant with the Father for mankind. His sufferings were the price of our redemption: and because he suffered in the flesh, as 'the son of David,' therefore is he 'established for ever, and his throne built up to all generations.' Remarkable are the words of the angel to Mary. 'The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall

<sup>1</sup> 'Disposui testamentum: percussi fœdus cum electo meo: id est, Davide et Christo.—Bossuet.

reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.' Luke, i. 32.

*5. And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord; thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints: or, The heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord; and the saints thy faithfulness in the congregation.*

Did not 'the heavens praise the wonders of Jehovah,' when a choir of angels descended from above, to sing an anthem, at the birth of Christ? And how must the celestial courts have resounded with the hallelujahs of those blessed spirits, when they again receive their King, returning in triumph from the conquest of his enemies? Nor do 'the saints' omit to celebrate God's 'faithfulness in the congregation' upon earth, while 'with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, they laud and magnify his glorious name, evermore praising him, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high.'

*6. For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? 7. God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints; and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. 8. O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? or, and thy faithfulness is round about thee.*

These verses proclaim that right and title which Jehovah hath to the praises of all his creatures in 'heaven and earth.' No one of them, however excellent and glorious, however deified and adored

by fond and foolish man, can enter the lists, and contest the superiority with its Maker. High over all is the throne of God : before him 'angels' veil their faces, 'saints' prostrate themselves with lowest reverence, and created nature trembles at his word : his 'power' is almighty, and derived from none ; and with 'truth' he is on all sides invested as with a garment : the former enables him, the latter (if we may so express it) binds him, to perform those gracious promises, which mercy prompted him to make, concerning our eternal redemption.

*9. Thou rulest the raging of the sea : when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.*

The extent of the ocean, the multitude of its waves, and their fury when excited by a storm, render it, in that state, the most tremendous object in nature ; nor doth any thing, which man beholds, give him so just an idea of human impotence, and of that divine power which can excite and calm so boisterous an element at pleasure. God himself therefore frequently appeals to this instance of his omnipotence ; see Job, xxviii. 11 ; Jer. v. 22 ; an attribute of which our Lord showed himself to have been possessed, when, being with his disciples in the ship, he arose and rebuked a tempestuous wind and a raging sea, and there was instantly a calm. In all our troubles and temptations, be thou, blessed Jesu, with us, and then they shall never finally overwhelm us.

*10. Thou hast broken Rahab, i. e. Egypt, in pieces, as one that is slain ; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.*



The destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptians is here mentioned as another instance of God's mighty power. And it is probable, that the foregoing verse was intended to allude more particularly to that miraculous exertion of God's sovereignty over the waters, the division of the Red Sea, which happened at the same time; as these two events are generally spoken of together. Thus Isaiah: 'Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab,' i. e. Egypt, 'and wounded the dragon,' i. e. Pharaoh? 'Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep, that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?' li. 9. The same power which effected all this, hath since, in Christ Jesus, overcome the world, destroyed the works of the devil, and ransomed mankind from the depths of the grave.

11. *The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine : as for the world, and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.* 12. *The north and the south, thou hast created them ; Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.*

The 'heavens,' and all the glorious bodies there ranged in beautiful order; the 'earth,' with its rich furniture, and the unnumbered tribes of its inhabitants, through its whole extent, from 'north to south,' and from east to west; all these are so many evidences of that wisdom and power which at the beginning contrived and formed them; all, in their respective ways, declare the glory and speak the praises of their great Creator; but chiefly the holy land, and the fruitful hills which adorned it. 'Tabor' in one part, and 'Hermon' in another, formerly seemed, as it were, to 'rejoice'

and sing, for the abundant favours showered down upon them by the God of Israel, who hath since caused all nations no less to exult and triumph in his saving name.

13. *Thou hast a mighty arm : strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.*

The Psalmist, having produced and meditated on some eminent instances of divine power, draws this general conclusion from the premises. Towards the Christian church 'the arm of Jehovah' hath been revealed in a still more extraordinary manner. She reflecteth on the wonders wrought by Jesus; a conquest over more formidable enemies than Pharaoh and his Egyptians; a redemption from more cruel bondage; salvation from sin and death; a new creation, new heavens, and new earth, a new Jerusalem, and a spiritual Sion. With additional conviction may she therefore exclaim, 'Thou hast a mighty arm; strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand!'

14. *Justice and judgment are the habitation, Heb. the establishment, of thy throne : mercy and truth shall go before thy face.*

Although the power of God be infinite, yet is it never exerted, but under the direction of his other attributes. When he goeth, as a judge, to his tribunal, 'mercy and truth go before his face;' they are represented as preceding him, to give notice of his advent, and to prepare his way. 'All the ways,' or dispensations 'of the Lord,' as it is elsewhere observed, 'are mercy and truth;' Ps. xxv. 10; they are the substance of all his revelations, which either promise salvation, or relate the per-

formance of such promises. By these is man warned and prepared for 'judgment;' which is to be the last and finishing scene. And when the great Judge of all the earth shall from his throne pronounce the irreversible sentence, not a creature then present shall be able to accuse that sentence of injustice. After this model should the thrones of princes, and the tribunals of earthly magistrates, be constituted in 'justice and judgment,' adorned with 'mercy and truth.'

*15. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound : they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.*

Next to the praises of Jehovah, is declared the happiness of those who have him for their God; who 'know the joyful sound, or sound of the trumpet,' by which the festivals of the Jewish church were proclaimed, and the people were called together to the offices of devotion; who enjoy the 'light' of truth, and through grace are enabled to 'walk' therein. These blessings are now become our own: the evangelical trumpet hath sounded through the once heathen world; the Sun of righteousness hath risen upon all nations. Let us attend to the 'joyful sound;' let us 'walk' in the glorious 'light.'

*16. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day : and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. 17. For thou art the glory of their strength : and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. 18. For the Lord is our defence ; and the Holy One of Israel is our King.*

It is the duty of Christians, as it was that of

Israelites, to ascribe all their strength, their success, and their glory, whether in matters temporal or spiritual, to Jehovah alone. Having heard the sound, and experienced the illuminating and reviving influences of the gospel, in the name and in the salvation of God we rejoice all the day, and in his righteousness only we trust to be exalted to heaven: to him we attribute the glory of that strength, with which, in time of temptation, we may find ourselves happily endued; and in his favour, or grace, our horn, or the efforts of our power, shall be exalted, and crowned with victory; our defence in all dangers is from Jehovah, who was ever the shield of his ancient people; and the Holy One of Israel is our Redeemer and our King.

19. *Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid, or, placed, help upon, or, in, one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.*

The covenant made with David was mentioned in general terms above, at verses 4, 5. But a more particular account is now given of God's dispensations relative to the son of Jesse, and his posterity. We are presented with the substance of the revelation made upon this subject, 'in vision,' to one of the prophets, perhaps Samuel, or Nathan, here styled an 'holy one,' or religious person, one favoured and accepted by God, who is introduced as manifesting to this his prophet the divine counsels concerning David: 'I have placed help upon, or in one, who shall become an eminent and mighty Saviour of Israel; from among all the people I have chosen, and determined to exalt him, for that

purpose, to the throne.' Thus was Messiah foretold, in prophetic visions and revelations, as the person designed to be the mighty Redeemer of his church; thus, in the fulness of time, was he chosen from among the children of men, and exalted, through sufferings, to an eternal throne.

*20. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: 21. With whom my hand shall be established; mine arm also shall strengthen him.*

David was the servant of God; he was, by the prophet Samuel, anointed with oil; he was strengthened and established in his kingdom, by the hand and arm of Jehovah. But never let Christians fail, in this eminently figurative character, to contemplate that true David, (for so he is called, Ezek. xxxiv. 23, xxxvii, 25,) the beloved Son of God; 'the servant and elect of Jehovah, in whom his soul delighted, and on whom he put his Spirit;' Isa. xlii. 1; whom he 'anointed with his holy oil, with the oil of gladness, with the Holy Ghost and with power;' Ps. xiv. 7; Acts, x. 38; whom he strengthened, and established in his spiritual kingdom, with his hand and arm, and the might of his omnipotence.

*22. The enemy shall not exact upon, or, deceive, him: nor the son of wickedness afflict, or, subdue, him. 23. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. 24. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.*

These promises were fulfilled to David, when God delivered him out of the hand of Saul, and of all

his other adversaries. See 2 Sam. xxii. 1. And in what a full, perfect, and divine sense were they verified to Christ! That subtle enemy, 'which deceiveth the whole world,' was not able to deceive him; neither the sons nor the father of wickedness could overthrow and subdue him: all opposition fell before him, and they who hated him suffered unparalleled desolation; the promised faithfulness and mercy of Jehovah were ever with him, and his kingdom was exalted with glory and honour.

*25. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.*

The dominions of David and his son Solomon extended from the Mediterranean 'sea' to the 'rivers' Euphrates, &c.: the empire of Christ is universal over Jews and Gentiles, throughout all the earth. See Ps. lxxii. 8, &c.

*26. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. 27. Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.*

All this, if in some respects true of David, is much more emphatically so of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'Son of God' is one of his distinguished titles; of 'the Father' he continually spoke, and to the Father he addressed his prayers and cries, in the days of his flesh; as man he was raised and exalted by the power and glory of the Divinity; he was 'the first-born of every creature, the first begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.' Col. i. 15; Rev. i. 5. Make us, blessed Lord, the sons of God, and teach us to

cry, Abba, Father ; give us victory and dominion over sin and death, that we may live and reign with thee for ever.

*28. My mercy will I keep for, or, to, him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. 29. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.*

God kept his mercy and covenant with David, by preserving the line of his posterity, until his great antitype, Messiah, the subject of all the promises, came, by whom the kingdom was established for ever, being changed into a spiritual one, which is to be transferred from earth to heaven, and rendered coeval with those eternal mansions of the blessed.

*30. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgements ; 31. If they break, or, profane, my statutes, and keep not my commandments ; 32. Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. 33. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. 34. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.*

The posterity of David were to enjoy God's favour, or be deprived of it, as they proved obedient or disobedient to his 'law;' as they executed or perverted its civil 'judgments;' as they observed or neglected its ceremonial 'statutes,' or religious institutions ; as they kept or broke its 'commandments,' or moral precepts. When they became rebellious, idolatrous, and profligate, the rod was lifted up, and due chastisement inflicted, sometimes

by the immediate hand of heaven, sometimes by the instrumentality of their heathen adversaries; famine and pestilence, war and captivity, were at different times employed to reclaim backsliding Israel. But still, the 'covenant' of God in Christ stood sure; the Jewish nation was preserved, through all changes and revolutions, 'until the Seed came to whom the promise was made;' nor was Jerusalem destroyed, before the new and spiritual kingdom of Messiah was set up in the earth. Christian communities, and the individuals that compose them, are in like manner corrected and punished for their offences. 'Nevertheless, God's loving kindness will he not utterly take from us, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. His covenant will he not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips.' So—'I am with you always,' says the Redeemer, 'even to the end of the world; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against my church.' Matt. xxviii. 20. xvi. 18. Nor shall the world be destroyed, until Christ come again, and his glorious kingdom be ready to appear.

*35. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. 36. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. 37. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.*

The promise, covenant, and oath of God, which he declareth shall never fail, are here repeated. They relate to Christ, that 'Seed,' or 'Son of David,' who 'endureth for ever.' His throne is resplendent as the 'sun,' and shall continue, after that luminary is extinguished: his church is permanent as the 'moon,' though, like her, subject to



vicissitudes, and liable, for a time, to be obscured by eclipses, during her present state upon earth. And while the rainbow shall be seen in the clouds, man has 'a faithful witness in heaven' of the immutable truth of God's word, and the infallible accomplishment of what he promises. 'Look upon the rainbow,' saith the wise son of Sirach, 'and praise him who made it: very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof: it compasseth the heaven about with a glorious circle, and the hands of the most High have bended it.' Ecclus. xliii. 11. But let us not forget likewise, when we look upon the rainbow, to praise him who made it to be a sign and sacred symbol of mercy; in which capacity we behold it, to our great and endless comfort, compassing the throne of Christ with a gracious, as well as glorious, circle. 'There was a rainbow round about the throne.' Rev. iv. 3; Ezek. i. 28.

*38. But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. 39. Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant; thou hast profaned his crown, by casting it to the ground.*

In the former part of our Psalm, we have seen what the divine promises were, which had been made to the house of David. By the latter part, upon which we are entering, it appears that the Psalm was written at a time, when the church of Israel was in such a manner oppressed and reduced by her enemies, that her members began almost to despair of those promises receiving their accomplishment. God seemed to have 'cast off' and 'abhorred' his 'anointed' and 'servant;' that is, David, or rather the prince of his family who was upon the throne when this captivity and desolation

happened; the 'covenant' seemed to be overturned and 'made void,' when the 'crown' of Israel was defiled in the dust.

40. *Thou hast broken down all his hedges, thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.* 41. *All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours.* 42. *Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.* 43. *Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle.* 44. *Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground.* 45. *The days of his youth hast thou shortened; thou hast covered him with shame.*

The manifold calamities of Sion are in these verses enumerated,—the demolition of fences and fortifications; the cruel ravages consequent thereupon; the shame of defeats; the reproaches and insults of victorious adversaries; the dishonours of violent and untimely death. In days like these here described, when the church and the king are permitted to fall into the hands of those who hate them, and to drink thus deeply of the cup of affliction, distrust and despondency are apt to seize upon the minds of men. Nay, when the faithful few beheld the true 'Son of David,' and 'Anointed' of Jehovah, in the day of his sufferings; when they saw him, without help or defence, 'spoiled and reproached by his neighbours;' when they viewed 'the right hand of his adversaries set up,' and all his 'enemies rejoicing' over him; his 'glory made to cease,' and his 'crown profaned in the dust; the days of his youth shortened,' and himself delivered over to a 'shameful' as well as painful

death; they then began to think 'the covenant made void,' and the promises at an end. 'W trusted,' said they, 'that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel!' Luke, xxiv. 21. And although Christ be long since risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, yet the prevalence of iniquity and the oppression of the church have been, and in the last days will be such, as to put the faith and hope of his servants to a sore trial while they wait for his second, as the ancient Jew did for his first advent.

46. *How long, Lord? Wilt thou hide thyself forever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?* 47. *Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?* Or, as Ainsworth translates the verse, *Remember how transitory I am, unto whom vanity thou hast created all the sons of Adam* 48. *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul, or, animal from the hand of the grave?* 49. *Lord, where are thy former loving kindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth.*

This is the humble and dutiful expostulation of the church with God in all her distresses upon the earth. By asking, 'How long, Lord? Wilt thou be angry for ever?' she tacitly pleadeth his promise not to be so: she urgeth the shortness of man's life here below, the universality of the fatal sentence, the impossibility of avoiding death, and, nothing further was to happen, the frustration of the divine counsels concerning man. From thence she entreateth God to remember the 'loving kindnesses' once promised by him with an oath to David as related in the former part of the Psalm. These

ing kindness' are called, in Isaiah lv. 3, 'the mercies of David;' which 'sure mercies of l' are affirmed by St. Paul, Acts, xiii. 34, to been then confirmed on Israel, when, in the n of Jesus, God raised our nature from the . To a resurrection, therefore, believers have aspired; thither have they directed their wishes; on that event have they fixed their hopes, as and of temporal sorrows, and the beginning of al joys.

*Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy ser-  
; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of  
e mighty people; 51. Wherewith thine enemies  
reproached, O Lord; wherewith they have  
ched the footsteps of thine anointed.*

e last argument urged by the church, in her tulation with God for a speedy redemption, e continual reproach to which she was subject, count of the promise being delayed. The ity people,' or heathen nations, who held her ptivity, and were witnesses of her wretched orlorn estate, ridiculed her pretensions to per- ty of empire in the house of David; they hemed the God who was said to have made promises; and 'reproached the footsteps,' or ed at the tardy advent of his Messiah,' who o establish in Israel his everlasting throne. ese cruel taunts and insults she was obliged ear in her bosom,' and there to suppress them

xprobraverunt vestigia Christi tui : ' tarditatem vestigiorum tui. Chald.—Iridebant nos quòd non adveniret ex- s ille Liberator, sive Cyrus, sive potius Christus de Davidis, regno ejus instaurando, et in æternum firmando.

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in silence, having nothing to answer in the day of her calamity and seeming destitution. St. Peter gives us a like account of the state of the Christian church in the latter days; he exhorts us to be 'mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour, because there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?' 2 Pet. iii. 4.

52. *Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen and Amen.*

But whatever be at any time our distress, either as a community or as individuals, still are we to believe, still to hope, still to bless and praise Jehovah, whose word is true, whose works are faithful, whose chastisements are mercies, and all whose promises are, in Christ Jesus, yea, and amen, for evermore.

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*Eighteenth Day.—Morning Prayer.*

### PSALM XC.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm is called, in its title, 'A prayer of Moses, the man of God,' By him it is imagined to have been composed when God shortened the days of the murmuring Israelites in the wilderness. See Numb. xiv. It is, however, a Psalm of general use, and is made, by the church, a part of her funeral service. It containeth, 1, 2. an address to the eternal and unchangeable God, the Saviour and Preserver of his people; 3—10. a most affecting description of man's mortal and transitory state on earth since the fall; 11. a complaint, that few meditate in such a manner upon death, as to prepare themselves for it; 12. a prayer for grace so to do; 13—17. and for the mercies of redemption.

1. *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.* 2. *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.*

The Psalmist, about to describe man's fleeting and transitory state, first directs us to contemplate the unchangeable nature and attributes of God, who hath always been a 'dwelling-place,' or place of defence and refuge, affording protection and comfort to his people in the world, as he promised to be before the world began, and will, in a more glorious manner, continue to be after its dissolution. See, for a parallel, Ps. cii. 25, &c. with St. Paul's application, Heb. i. 10.

3. *Thou turnest man to destruction: and sayest, Return, ye children of men.*

Death was the penalty inflicted on man for sin. The latter part of the verse alludes to the fatal sentence, Gen. iii. 19. 'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.' How apt are we to forget both our original and our end!

4. *For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.*

The connexion between the verse preceding and the verse now before us, seems to be this: God sentenced man to death. It is true, the execution of the sentence was at first deferred, and the term of human life suffered to extend to near a thousand years. But what was even that, what is any period of time, or time itself, if compared with the duration of the Eternal? All time is equal, when it is past; a thousand years, when gone, are forgotten

as yesterday ; and the longest life of man, to a person who looks back upon it, may appear only as three hours, or one quarter of the night. .

*5. Thou carriest them away as with a flood ; they are as a sleep : in the morning they are like grass which groweth up ; or, as grass that changeth. 6. In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up ; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.*

The shortness of life, and the suddenness of our departure hence, are illustrated by three similitudes. The first is that of a 'flood,' or torrent pouring unexpectedly and impetuously from the mountains, and sweeping all before it in an instant. The second is that of 'sleep,' from which when a man awaketh he thinketh the time passed in it to have been nothing. In the third similitude, man is compared to the 'grass' of the field. In the morning of youth fair and beautiful, he groweth up and flourisheth ; in the evening of old age (and how often before that evening !) he is cut down by the stroke of death ; all his juices, to the circulation of which he stood indebted for life, health, and strength, are dried up ; he withereth, and turneth again to his earth. ' Surely all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field ! ' Isa. xl. 6. Of this truth, the word of God, the voice of nature, and daily experience, join to assure us : yet who ordereth his life and conversation as if he believed it ?

*7. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. 8. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee : our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.*

The generations of men are troubled and consumed by divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death, through the displeasure of God; his displeasure is occasioned by their sins, all of which he seeth and punisheth. If Moses wrote this Psalm, the provocations and chastisements of Israel are here alluded to. But the case of the Israelites in the wilderness is the case of Christians in the world; and the same thing is true both in them and in us.

9. *For all our days are passed away in thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told.*

Life is compared to a 'tale' that is told and forgotten; to a 'word' which is but air, or breath, and vanisheth into nothing as soon as spoken; or perhaps, as the original generally signifies, to a 'meditation, a thought,' which is of a nature still more fleeting and transient.

10. *The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength, they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*

This again might be primarily spoken by Moses, concerning Israel. The generation of those who came out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upwards, fell within the space of forty years, in the wilderness; Numb. xiv. 29; and they who lived longest experienced only labour and sorrow, until they were cut off, like grass, and, by the breath of God's displeasure, blown away from the face of the earth. Like the Israelites, we have been brought out of Egypt, and sojourn in the wilderness; like them we murmur, and offend God our Saviour; like them we fall and perish. To the



age of seventy years, few of us can hope to attain; labour and sorrow are our portion in the world; we are mowed down, as this year's grass of the field; we fly away, and are no more seen in the land of the living.

11. *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.*

Houbigant renders the verse thus, 'Quis novit vim iræ tuæ; et, prout terribilis es, furorem tuum?' 'Who knoweth' or considereth, 'the power of thine anger; and thy wrath, in proportion as thou art terrible?' that is, in other words, Notwithstanding all the manifestations of God's indignation against sin, which introduced death and every other calamity among men, who is there that knoweth, who that duly considereth and layeth to heart the almighty power of that indignation; who that is induced, by beholding the mortality of his neighbours, to prepare himself for his own departure hence? Such holy consideration is the gift of God, from whom the Psalmist, in the next verse, directeth us to request it.

12. *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

He who 'numbereth his days,' or taketh a right account of the shortness of this present life, compared with the unnumbered ages of that eternity which is future, will soon become a proficient in the school of true wisdom. He will learn to give the preference where it is due; to do good and suffer evil upon earth, expecting the reward of both in heaven. Make us wise, blessed Lord, but wise unto salvation.

13. *Return, O Lord, how long ? and let it repent thee concerning, or, be propitiated towards, thy servants.*

During the reign of death over poor mankind, God is represented as absent; he is therefore by the faithful entreated to 'return,' and to satisfy their longing desires after salvation; to hasten the day when Messiah should make a 'propitiation' for sin, when he should redeem his servants from death, and ransom them from the power of the grave. The Christian, who knoweth that his Lord is risen indeed, looks forward to the resurrection of the just, when death shall be finally swallowed up in victory.

14. *O satisfy us early, or, in the morning, with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.* 15. *Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.*

The church prayeth for the dawning of that glorious morning, when every cloud shall vanish at the rising of the Sun of righteousness, and night and darkness shall be no more. Then only shall we be 'satisfied, or saturated, with the mercy' of Jehovah; then only shall we 'rejoice and be glad all our days.' The time of our pilgrimage upon earth is a time of sorrow; we grieve for our departed friends and our surviving friends must soon grieve for us; these are 'the days wherein God afflicteth us, these the years wherein we see evil:' but he will hereafter 'make us glad according to them;' in proportion to our sufferings, if rightly we bear those sufferings, will be our reward; nay, 'these light afflictions, which are but

for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Then shall our joy be increased, and receive an additional relish from the remembrance of our former sorrow; then shall we bless the days and the years which exercised our faith, and perfected our patience; and then shall we bless God, who chastised us for a season, that he might save us for ever.

*16. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. 17. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.*

The redemption of man is that 'work' of God whereby 'his glory' is manifested to all generations, and which all generations do therefore long to behold accomplished. For this purpose the faithful beseech God to let his 'beauty,' his splendour, the light of his countenance, his grace and favour, be upon them: to 'establish the work of their hands,' to bless, prosper, and perfect them in their Christian course and warfare; until, through him, they shall be enabled to subdue sin, and triumph over death.

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### PSALM XCI.

**ARGUMENT.**—The prophet, 1—10. declareth the security of the righteous man under the care and protection of heaven, in times of danger, when, 11, 12. a guard of angels is set about him. 13. His final victory over the enemies of his salvation is foretold; and 14—16. God himself is introduced, promising him deliverance, exaltation, glory, and immortality. This Psalm is addressed, primarily, to Messiah. That

it related to him, Jews and Christians are agreed; and the devil, Matt. iv. 6. cited two verses from it, as universally known and allowed to have been spoken of him.

1. *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*  
 2. *I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.* 3. *Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.*

In these verses, as they now stand, there is much obscurity and confusion. Bishop Lowth, in his twenty-sixth Lecture, seemeth to have given their true construction: 'He who dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High; who abideth under the shadow of the Almighty; who saith of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I will trust;' leaving the sentence thus imperfect, the Psalmist maketh a beautiful apostrophe to that person whom he has been describing—'Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.' The description is eminently applicable to the man Christ Jesus.<sup>1</sup> He is represented as dwelling, like the ark in the holy of holies, under the immediate 'shadow' and protection of the Almighty, who was his 'refuge and fortress' against the open attacks of his enemies; his preserver from the 'snares' of the devil, and from the universal contagion of sin, that spiritual pestilence.' In all dangers, whether spiritual or corporeal, the members of Christ's mystical body may reflect with comfort, that they are under the same Almighty protector.

<sup>1</sup> Ode Davidica insignis xci. agit directe et primo loco de tempore et defensione quam Deus Christo Jesu Doctori et apostoli ipsius præstaret.—Vitringa, Comment. in Jesai. ii. 565.

4. *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*

The security afforded by a superintending Providence, to those who trust therein, is here, with the utmost beauty and elegance, compared to that shelter, which the young of birds are always sure to find under the 'wings' of their dam, when fear causeth them to fly thither for refuge: see Deut. xxii. 11; Matt. xxiii. 37. The 'truth' of God's word, wherein he promiseth to be our defence, is, to a believer, his 'shield and buckler,' in the day of battle and war.

5. *Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day. 6. Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness: nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day.*

How much man standeth in need of the above-mentioned protection of heaven, appeareth from a survey of the dangers to which he is continually exposed. Various are the terrors of the night; manifold the perils of the day! from diseases whose infection maketh its progress unobserved; from assaults, casualties, and accidents, which can neither be foreseen nor guarded against. The soul hath likewise her enemies, ready to attack and surprise her at all hours. Avarice and ambition are abroad watching for her in the day; while concupiscence, like a pestilence, 'walketh in darkness.' In adversity she is disturbed by terrors; in prosperity, still more endangered by pleasures. But Jesus Christ has overcome the world, to prevent us from being overcome by it.

*7. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee.*

This promise has oftentimes, in a wonderful manner, been verified to those faithful servants of God, whom the pestilence itself hath not deterred from doing the duties of their station. The bishop and some of the intendants of Marseilles, who continued to perform their respective offices, during the whole time of the plague there in 1720, are signal and well-known instances. Sin is a pestilence, the contagion of which no son of Adam ever escaped but the blessed Jesus. He stood alone untouched by its venom; thousands and ten thousands, all the myriads of mankind, fell around him; 'but it did not 'come nigh Him.' Heal us of this our distemper, O thou Physician of souls, and let it not prove our everlasting destruction; 'stand,' like thy representative of old, 'between the dead and the living, and 'let the plague be stayed.' Numb. xvi. 47, 48.

*8. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.*

The meaning is, that the righteous person all along spoken of, himself secure from the judgments of God, should in safety behold the destruction wrought by them upon impenitent and incorrigible sinners. This will be the case with the church, as well as her glorious head, at the last day.

*9. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; 10. There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.*

The sentiment in these verses is evidently the same with that in verses 5, 6; namely, that God preserveth such as trust in him, after the pattern of the holy Jesus, from those evils, and from that perdition which are reserved for the ungodly. Dr. Durrell translates the ninth verse, in the way of apostrophe, literally thus: 'Surely thou, O Lord, art my refuge; O Most High, thou hast fixed thine habitation;' i. e. in Sion, to be the protector of his servant.

*11. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. 12. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

This passage was cited by the devil, who tempted our Lord to cast himself from a pinnacle of the temple, upon presumption of the promise here made, that angels should guard and support him in all dangers. But Christ, in his answer, at once detecteth and exposeth the sophistry of the grand deceiver, by showing, that the promise belonged only to those who fell unavoidably into danger, in the course of duty; such might hope for the help and protection of heaven; but that he who should wantonly and absurdly throw himself into peril, merely to try whether Providence would bring him out of it, must expect to perish for his pains. 'Jesus saith unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' Matt. iv. 7.

*13. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under thy feet.*

The fury and the venom of our spiritual enemies

are often in Scripture portrayed by the natural qualities of 'lions and serpents.' Messiah's complete victory over those enemies seemeth here to be predicted. Through grace he maketh us more than conquerors in our conflicts with the same adversaries. 'The God of peace,' saith St. Paul, 'shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.' Rom. xvi. 20. And it is observable that, when the seventy disciples return to Christ with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name;' he answers in the metaphorical language of our Psalm: 'Behold, I give unto you power to tread on scorpions and serpents, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you,' &c. Luke x. 17. Give us, O Lord, courage to resist the 'lion's' rage, and wisdom to elude the wiles of the 'serpent.'

14. *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.* 15. *He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honour, or, glorify him.* 16. *With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.*

In the former part of our Psalm, the prophet had spoken in his own person; here God himself is plainly introduced as the speaker. And, O how sweet, how delightful and comfortable are his words, addressed eminently to his beloved Son Messiah; and in him to all of us, his adopted children, and the heirs of eternal life; to all who love God, and have 'known his name!' To such are



promised, an answer to their prayers; the presence of their heavenly Father with them; in the day of trouble, protection, and deliverance; salvation, and honour, and glory, and immortality. All these promises have already been made good to our gracious Head and Representative. His prayers have been heard; his sufferings are over: he is risen and ascended; and behold, he liveth and reigneth for evermore. Swift fly the intermediate years, and rise that long-expected morning, when He who is gone 'to prepare a place for us, shall come again, and take us to himself, that where he is we may be also!'

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## PSALM XCII.

ARGUMENT.—The title of this Psalm is, 'A Psalm, or Song, for the Sabbath Day.' It teacheth, 1—5. the duty, time, and manner, of giving thanks for the works and dispensations of God. Thoughtless men are admonished, 6. to reflect upon the final issue of all these works and dispensations; namely, 7—9. the utter perdition of the ungodly, and, 10—14. the exaltation of the church in Christ Jesus, 15. to the praise and glory of God most high.

1. It is a *good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High:*  
2. *To show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night:* 3. *Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery! upon the harp with a solemn sound.*

'Thanksgiving' is the duty, and ought to be the delight of a Christian. It is his duty, as being the least return he can make to his great Benefactor: it ought to be his delight, 'for it is that of angels,

and will be that of every grateful heart, whether in heaven or in earth. The 'mercy' of God in promising salvation, and his 'faithfulness' in accomplishing it, are inexhaustible subjects for 'morning and evening' praises; every instrument should be strung, and every voice tuned to celebrate them, until day and night come to an end. But more especially should this be done on the 'sabbath day;' which, when so employed, affords a lively resemblance of that eternal sabbath, to be hereafter kept by the redeemed, in the kingdom of God.

4. *For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*

A prospect of creation in the vernal season, fallen as it is, inspires the mind with a joy which no words can express. But how doth the regenerate soul exult and triumph, at beholding that 'work' of God's 'hand,' whereby he hath created all things anew in Christ Jesus! If we can be pleased with such a world as this, where sin and death have fixed their habitation, shall we not much rather admire those other heavens, and that other earth, wherein dwell righteousness and life? What are we to think of the palace, since even the prison is not without its charms.

5. *O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.* 6. *A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.*

Glorious are the works, profound the counsels, marvellous the dispensations of God, in nature, in providence, in grace. But all are lost to the man void of spiritual discernment; who, like his fellow

'brutes;' is bowed down to earth, and knoweth no pleasures but those of sense. Here he hath chosen his paradise, and set up his tabernacle: not considering that his tabernacle must shortly be taken down, and he must remove hence for ever.

*7. When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever. 8. But thou, Lord, art most high for evermore.*

It is not improbable that these verses should be connected with that preceding, thus—'A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this;' namely, that 'When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever;' they are only nourishing themselves like senseless cattle in plentiful pastures, for the approaching day of slaughter. He who is ignorant of the final issue of things, who attendeth not to his eternal interest, he is, in Scripture language, 'the brutish man,' and the 'fool' who knoweth not the works, neither understandeth the designs of Heaven. When the 'grass' hath attained to its most flourishing estate, and all the flowers of the field are in perfect beauty, then the mower entereth with his scythe. What a beautiful and instructive emblem is here held forth to us! what a forcible admonition to trust only in him, who, without 'variableness or shadow of turning,' is 'Most High for evermore!'

*9. For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord, lo, thine enemies shall perish: all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered. 10. But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be, or, I am anointed with fresh oil.*

The 'workers of iniquity' are the enemies of 'Jehovah,' and will be 'scattered' by the breath of his displeasure, as grass, after it is cut down, dried up, and withered, is driven away by the whirlwinds of heaven. 'But my horn,' saith the Psalmist, (it is likely in the person of Messiah,) 'my horn,' that is, the strength and power of my kingdom 'shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn,'<sup>1</sup> like the power of the strongest creatures, to which that of states and empires is often compared; 'I shall be,' or, 'I am, anointed with fresh oil;' I am appointed and consecrated king by the holy unction. Christians have 'an unction from the Holy One,' by which they are enabled to subdue their spiritual enemies; they reign over their passions and affections; they are exalted in the Redeemer; they are 'made unto their God kings and priests.' 1 John ii. 20; Rev. v. 10.

11. *Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies: and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.*

The words, 'my desire,' are twice inserted by our translators. But would it not be better, if we were to supply the ellipsis in this manner, 'Mine eye shall behold the fall of mine enemies; and mine ear shall hear the destruction of the wicked that rise up against me?' The sense of the verse is plain. It is intended to express an assurance of faith, an humble confidence in the promises of God, that our efforts shall at length be crowned with victory over every thing which resisteth and

<sup>1</sup> Heb. צְבִי, an eastern animal of the "stag" or "deer" kind, remarkable for its height, strength, and fierceness.

opposeth itself; and that the day is coming, when we shall view all the enemies of our salvation dead at our feet.

*12. The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree :  
he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.*

The momentary prosperity of the wicked was compared above to the transient verdure of 'grass.' The durable felicity of the righteous is here likened to the lasting strength and beauty of 'palms' and 'cedars.' But chiefly is the comparison applicable to that Just One, the King of Righteousness, and Tree of Life; eminent and upright; ever verdant and fragrant; under the greatest pressure and weight of sufferings, still ascending toward heaven; affording both fruit and protection; incorruptible and immortal. 'I sat down,' saith the church, 'under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.' Song ii. 3.

*13. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord,  
shall flourish in the courts of our God.*

Believers are styled by Isaiah, 'Trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah:' ch. lxi. 3. They are planted by the living waters of comfort, 'in the house of God;' where, under the means of grace, they 'flourish' in hope of glory; 'fenced and enclosed by the discipline and orders of the church, and by the consequent favour and protection of heaven; their verdure is conspicuous, and ever constant, whether in the summer of prosperity, or the winter of adversity: their actions and principles are ever upright and fair; yea, their very leaf exhales a delightful perfume, by a holy

example and conversation ; their affections and desires are ever ascending towards the noblest and most sublime objects, the things that are above, the glorious things of heaven."<sup>1</sup>

14. *They shall still bring forth fruit in old age: they shall be fat and flourishing.*

Happy the man whose goodness is always progressive, and whose virtues increase with his years; who loseth not, in multiplicity of worldly cares or pleasures, the holy fervours of his first love, but goeth on burning and shining more and more, to the end of his days. The church, like her representative Sarah, is now 'well stricken in years;' but we hope that, like her, she will 'still bring forth fruit in her old age;' we look for many more 'children of promise' to be born unto Christ, born from among the Jews and Gentiles.

15. *To show that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*

The fruit brought forth in the church redounds to the glory of God, by whom the trees, in this his new paradise, were planted; it shows to all the world that he is just and 'upright' in his dealings; that he is true to his promises; immoveable, as a 'rock' in his counsels; determined to punish the wicked, and to reward the good; so that when his proceedings shall come to be unfolded at the last day, it will appear to men and angels that 'there is no unrighteousness in him.'

<sup>1</sup> Essay on the Proper Lessons, by Mr. Wogan, vol. iii. p. 49.

*Eighteenth Day.—Evening Prayer.*

## PSALM XCIII.

ARGUMENT.—The Jews acknowledge, that the kingdom of Messiah is prophesied of in this Psalm, and in all those which follow, to the hundredth. 1, 2. The church celebrates the majesty, power, and glory of the eternal King; 3. describes the danger she is often in from persecutions, &c. but, 4. strengtheneth herself in God her Saviour, whose house, 5. ought to be, like himself, full of truth and holiness.

1. *The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is established that it cannot be moved.*

From the beginning, God, as Creator, was sovereign Lord of the universe. He was also formerly, in a more especial manner, King of Israel. But since that time a new and spiritual kingdom hath been erected by Jesus Christ, as Redeemer, whom the church now celebrates, and whose praises she sings continually. Risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, the Lord Jesus reigneth, and shall reign, 'till he hath put all enemies under his feet.' 1 Cor. xv. 25. By the glorification of his human nature, he is 'clothed with majesty. All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth;' Matt. xxviii. 18; so that he is 'girded with strength;' and through that strength, he hath 'established' the new 'world,' that is to say, his church, that it 'cannot be moved,' or subverted, by all the powers of earth and hell.

2. *Thy throne is established of old; thou art from everlasting.*

Earthly thrones are temporary ; they are set up and cast down again, neither is any trust to be reposed in them. But the throne of Christ is eternal and unchangeable. Constituted before the foundation of the world, it is to endure when no traces of such a system having once existed shall any more be found.

3. *The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice ; the floods lift up their waves.* 4. *The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.*

In the first of these verses, the church appears like a ship in a stormy sea, to which she is often compared. Persecutions and afflictions are those 'floods,' those 'waves' of this troublesome world, which threaten every moment to overwhelm and sink her. With a fearful and desponding tone of voice, therefore she crieth out, 'The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice ; the floods lift up their waves !' But immediately she strengtheneth and comforteth herself in the Lord her God : 'The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.' He can say to sorrows and temptations, as he doth to the waters of the ocean, 'Peace, be still ; hitherto shall ye come, but no further : ' and his word is endued with equal power in both cases.

5. *Thy testimonies are very sure ; holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever.*

God's 'testimonies' are the promises made in Scripture to the church, that he will be with her,



during the afflictions which befall her here below, and will, in time, deliver her out of all her troubles. These 'testimonies are very sure;' these promises do not, they cannot, fail. 'Holiness,' therefore, which consisteth in obedience and patience, 'becometh,' is the proper ornament, grace, and beauty of 'his house,' and of Christians, those living stones that compose it. Sacred and inviolable is the word of our King; sacred and inviolable should be the loyalty of his subjects.

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PSALM XCIV.

ARGUMENT.—The Psalmist, complaining of corrupt and troublous times, in the person of the church, 1—4. prayeth for the downfall of prosperous wickedness; 5, 6. he describeth the cruelty, and, 7—11. reproveth the atheistical folly of those who persecute God's people; 12, 13. he extollet the blessedness of the persecuted, if they are endued with faith and patience, inasmuch as, 14, 15. the divine promise and their future reward are certain; he, therefore, 16, 19. throweth himself wholly upon God, whose mercies never fail, who, 20, 21. cannot be on the side of iniquity, but, 22, 23. will preserve his saints and destroy their enemies.

1. *O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself.*
2. *Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth; render a reward to the proud.*

The church, however unjustly oppressed and afflicted, remembereth that 'vengeance belongeth' not to her, had she the power to inflict it, but 'to God' only, who hath said, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.' Rom. xii. 19. To him, therefore, *she* maketh her supplication, that he would mani-

fest his glory in her salvation; that he would ascend the tribunal, 'as judge of the earth,' try her cause, and avenge her of her insolent and cruel persecutors.

3. Lord, *how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?* 4. *How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?*

The 'triumphs' of wickedness, the 'hard speeches,' taunts, and scoffs of infidelity, against Christ, and all who belong to him, are a continual grief of heart to the faithful in the world, who desire nothing so much as to see the empire of sin at an end, and the kingdom of righteousness established. But for this great event they must wait with patience, until the time appointed by the Father, when the iniquities of the world, and the sufferings of the church shall be full. 'I saw under the altar,' saith the well-beloved John, 'the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed, as they were, should be fulfilled.' Rev. vi. 9. &c.

5. *They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage.* 6. *They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.*

Some instances of cruelty, exercised by the ene-

mies against the 'people and heritage' of God, are here specified. 'Widows, strangers, and orphans,' are destitute of the help and protection afforded by husbands, friends, and fathers. Christ is become an husband to the church, a father to her children, and the only friend to both in time of need. Else were we all in the state of strangers and orphans, exposed, with our widowed mother, to the unrelenting malice and fury of the great oppressor and murderer.

*7. Yet they say, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. 8. Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? 9. He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? 10. He that chastiseth the heathen, shall he not be correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? or, he that instructeth the nations, shall not he rebuke; even he that teacheth man knowledge?*

The Psalmist informeth us, that men are encouraged in their injustice and villany, by a persuasion that God doth not behold or regard what they do to his people. The absurdity of such a conceit is shown from these considerations; that it is God who bestoweth on man the powers of seeing and hearing, and therefore that he himself must needs be possessed of those powers in the highest perfection; that it is God who hath instructed the world, by his revelations, in religious knowledge, and consequently, without all doubt, he cannot be ignorant of the use and abuse which men make of that his unspeakable gift.

*11. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.*

So far is God from being a stranger to the actions, that he is privy to the first 'thoughts' of men, from whence those actions flow; he is acquainted with all their counsels against his church, and knoweth them to be as vain as the imagination that he is ignorant of them. The wicked can no more escape the hand, than they can elude the eye of Heaven.

*12. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, or, instructest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law: 13. That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.*

Since, therefore, the schemes of the adversary are vain, and the counsel of Jehovah shall infallibly stand, happy is the man who, having learned, from the Scriptures of truth, the lessons of faith and patience, enjoys tranquillity of mind in time of trouble, while destruction is preparing for the impenitent. Then, when 'the days of adversity' are over, shall pain and sorrow take a final leave of the righteous to go and dwell with the wicked to eternal ages. The former shall enter into the rest and joy of their Lord; the latter, into the fire prepared originally for the devil and his angels.

*14. For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance. 15. But judgment shall return unto righteousness; and all the upright in heart shall follow it.*

The faith and patience of the saints are built upon the foundation of God's promise not to 'cast off and forsake,' however he may chasten and correct, his 'people and inheritance.' At a fit time,

'judgment shall return to righteousness,' which it might seem to have forsaken: iniquitous oppressors shall meet with the punishment they have deserved, and the faithful shall experience the promised redemption. For thus Dr. Hammond renders and expounds the last clause of the two verses under consideration—'and after this,' i. e. after 'judgment' shall have 'returned to righteousness, all the upright in heart;' i. e. it shall be their time; they shall succeed and flourish. Such were those halcyon days enjoyed by the Jews, after the fall of Babylon, and their return to their own land; such those times of refreshment to the church Christian, when the Pagan persecutions were at an end, and the Roman empire became Christian. Far more transcendent is the felicity of a soul when it exchanges the miseries of the world for the delights of paradise, there to wait, with its sister spirits, until the bodies of saints shall pass from the dishonours of the grave to the glories of immortality.

16. *Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers? or, who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?* 17. *Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.*

But in the mean season, while 'evil-doers' are permitted to prosper, and 'the workers of iniquity' carry on their designs, the prophet asks, in the person of the church, who is there that will or can protect, defend, and deliver? The answer is, God only can do it: 'Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence,' or, I had almost been in the state of death. How often have our spiritual enemies arisen against us, threatening

to bring us into a state of eternal death, but the Lord Jesus was our help and our salvation !

18. *When I said, my foot slippeth ; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.*

When the child of God, walking in the slippery paths of life, findeth himself falling into temptation, if he confesseth his inability to stand his ground, and crieth out, like Peter on the water, to his heavenly Father, ' Lord, save me, I perish ; ' a merciful, gracious, and powerful hand will immediately be stretched out to support his steps, and establish his goinga.

19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.*

The excellent Norris, in a masterly sermon on this verse, has given us the following elegant and affecting paraphrase of it :—" When my mind sallies out into a multitude of thoughts, and those thoughts make me sad and heavy, anxious and solicitous, as presenting to my view my own weakness and infirmity, and the universal vanity of all those seeming props and stays, upon which my deluded soul was apt to lean ; the many great calamities of life, and the much greater terrors of death ; the known miseries of the present state, and the darkness and uncertainty of the future ; still urging me with fresh arguments of sorrow, and opening new and new scenes of melancholy, till my soul begins to faint and sink under the burden she has laid upon herself ; when I am thus thoughtful, and thus sorrowful, then it is, O my God, that I feel the relief of thy divine refreshments ; I find myself supported and borne up by the strong tide of thy con-

solations, which raise my drooping head, stril light into my soul, and make me not only disr but even forget, that sorrow and melancholy, wh my thoughtfulness had brought upon me." V that reads this will not thankfully take and fol the advice offered in another part of the s discourse? " Whenever, therefore, thoughts a in thy heart, and troubles from those thougl when thy mind is dark and cloudy, and all regions of the soul are overcast; then betake thy to thy oratory, either to thy closet, or the chu and there entertain thy soul with the pleasure religion, and the satisfaction of a clear conscien See Norris's Practical Discourses, vol. iii. ser. .

20. *Shall the throne of iniquity have fellow with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?*

One consideration which affordeth comfort the faithful under persecution and affliction, is t that God can never be on the side of oppres and injustice, though, to answer wise and salu purposes, he may, for a time, suffer them to l the dominion, and to establish iniquity by . A distinction there certainly must be betw right and wrong; and the former must as certa triumph at the last day.

21. *They gather themselves together against soul of the righteous, and condemn the inno blood.*

Righteousness and innocence are most atroc crimes, in the eyes of wickedness and guilt. these crimes Cain slew his brother Abel, the J crucified Christ, the pagans tortured and murd his disciples, and bad men in all ages have pe

cuted the good. 'Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.' 1 John, iii. 13.

*22. But the Lord is my defence: and my God is the rock of my refuge. 23. And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off.*

Jehovah is our 'defence;' we fear not the fiery darts of the enemy: He is 'the rock of our refuge;' we bid defiance to the rage and malice of earth and hell. Armed with the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit, we rise superior to every effort of diabolical malice and secular power; waiting, in patience and hope, for the coming of that day when He who hateth unrighteousness, and with whom the throne of iniquity can have no fellowship, shall visit the wickedness of the wicked upon them; when the world of the ungodly shall share the fate of apostate Jerusalem, and the righteous shall be glorified with their Lord and Saviour.

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*Nineteenth Day.—Morning Prayer.*

### PSALM XCV.

**ARGUMENT.** This Psalm hath been long used in the Christian church, as a proper introduction to her holy services. It containeth, 1, 2. an exhortation to praise Jehovah, 3. for his greatness, 4, 5. and for his works of creation; 6. men are invited to worship him as their Maker, and, 7. as their Preserver; 8—11. they are warned against tempting and provoking him, by the example of the Israelites in the wilderness. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews hath taught us to consider the Psalm as an address to believers under the gospel.



1. *O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.*

In this first verse Christians now exhort and stir up each other, as the Jews did of old, to employ their voices in honour of Jehovah, to celebrate 'the rock of their salvation.' Jesus, by redeeming us from our enemies, hath opened our lips, and our mouths ought, therefore, to show forth his praise. He is the Rock of Ages, in which is opened a fountain for sin and uncleanness; the Rock which attends the church in the wilderness, pouring forth the water of life for her use and comfort; the Rock which is our fortress against every enemy, shadowing and refreshing a weary land. 'O come, then, let us sing unto this our Lord; let us make a joyful noise unto this Rock of our salvation.'

2. *Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.*

The 'presence' of Jehovah dwelt formerly between the cherubim, in a tabernacle, or temple, made with hands, whither the Israelites were to resort, until God became manifest in the flesh. After that time, the divine presence left the synagogue, and removed into the Christian church; by her we are now invited 'to come before that presence with thanksgiving,' and, while we 'make a joyful noise,' by chanting these divine 'Psalms,' to imitate, in some measure, 'the heavenly choirs, who rest not,' from their blessed employment of praising God, 'day or night.' Rev. iv. 8.

3. *For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.*

It is not without reason that we are exhorted to 'give thanks and praise unto our God and King; for he is worthy to receive glory and blessing:' Rev. v. 12. He is a God above all that are called by that name; above those deities which were once worshiped by the ancient heathen; above the world, which still continues to be an object of adoration among infatuated mortals. His throne is over all, and power and dominion are his.

*4. In his hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also. 5. The sea is his, and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land.*

The treasures, which lie hid in the 'deep places' of the earth beneath; the majestic pride and 'strength of the hills,' which tower above, and lift up their heads to heaven; the unnumbered waves of the great and wide 'sea,' which roll in perpetual motion round the world; the rich and varied produce of the 'dry land,' crowned with verdure and beauty; together with every thing that liveth in the waters, or on the earth; all are under the government of our God; by him were all things created; by him have all things been redeemed.

*6. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.*

As in the beginning of the Psalm we were called upon to 'praise' Jehovah, so here we are invited to humble ourselves before him in 'prayer.' From him we had our being; him, therefore, we are to supplicate for every other blessing, both in this life, and that which is to come. And since he

made our bodies, as well as our souls, it is meet and right that they should bear their part in his service, and that internal worship should be accompanied and signified by that which is external.

*7. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.*

An additional reason why we should both praise Jehovah and pray to him, is the peculiar relation into which he hath been pleased to put himself by the covenant of grace; 'he is our God;' we are the objects of his tender care and unspeakable love: we are his 'people,' and his 'sheep;' his chosen flock, which he hath purchased with his blood, which he feeds with his word, and refreshes with his Spirit, in fair and pleasant pastures. From those pastures, O thou good Shepherd! suffer us not to stray; or, if we do stray, bring us speedily back again, by any means which thou, in thine infinite wisdom, shalt think fit. Wholesome is the discipline which drives us into the fold, and keeps us there.

*8. To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness. 9. When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.*

The first clause of these two verses may be joined to the preceding verse, thus: 'He is our God, we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand, if ye will hear his voice to-day;' that is, if ye will be his obedient people, he will continue to be your God. Or else the word כִּי, translated 'if,' may be rendered in the optative form, 'O that

you would hear his voice to-day,' saying unto you, 'Harden not,' &c. However this be, what follows to the end of the Psalm is undoubtedly spoken in the person of God himself, who may be considered as addressing us, in these latter days, by the gospel of his Son; for so the apostle teaches us to apply the whole passage, Heb. iii. iv. The Israelites, when they came out of Egypt, had a day of probation, and a promised rest to succeed it; but, by unbelief and disobedience, they to whom it was promised, that is, the generation of those who came out of Egypt, fell short of it, and died in the wilderness. The gospel, in like manner, offers both to Jew and Gentile another day of probation in this world, and another promised rest to succeed it, which remaineth for the people of God in heaven. All whom it concerns are, therefore, exhorted to beware lest they forfeit the second rest, as murmuring and rebellious Israel came short of the first. The verses now before us allude to what passed at the place called 'Massah,' and 'Meribah,' from the people there 'tempting' and striving with their God, notwithstanding all the mighty works which he had wrought for them, before their eyes. Exod. xvii. 7.

10. *Forty years long was I grieved, or, disgusted, with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their hearts, and they have not known my ways.*

O the desperate presumption of man, that he should offend his Maker 'forty years!' O the patience and long suffering of his Maker, that he should allow him forty years to offend in! Sin begins in the 'heart' by its desires 'wandering' and

going astray after forbidden objects; whence follows inattention to the 'ways' of God; to his dispensations, and our own duty. Lust in the heart, like vapour in the stomach, soon affects the head, and clouds the understanding.

11. *Unto whom I swear in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest.*

Exclusion from Canaan was the punishment of Israelitish contumacy; exclusion from heaven is to be the punishment of disobedience among Christians. To take vengeance on those who reject the gospel terms, is no less a part of the covenant and oath of God, than it is to save and glorify those who accept them. Yet men continue deliberately to commit those sins, which the Almighty standeth thus engaged to punish with destruction! 'Take heed,' therefore, 'brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; while it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke; howbeit,

<sup>1</sup> Sensus hujus loci ex Paulo sic concinnandus; nempe requiem a Deo Israëlitis esse promissam in terrâ Chananaâ; omnes tamen interim in deserto cecidisse hâc requie frustratos: quare Spiritum Sanctum per Davidem ad novam requiem invitasse; ad novum illud sabbatum ab ipso mundi exordio diæ septimæ requie figuratum, novumque indixisse diem quo sub Christo, in Ecclesiâ, ac cœlesti patriâ quiesceremus, nisi essemus increduli: unde sic concludit Paulus. 'Festinemus ingredi in illam requiem.'—Bossuet.

not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he, that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being made us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.' Heb. iii. 12, &c.

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PSALM XCVI.

ARGUMENT.—By common consent of Jews and Christians, we apply this Psalm to the times of Messiah. 1—4. Men are exhorted to sing his praises; to declare his salvation; 4, 5. to acknowledge his supremacy over the gods of the nations, with, 6. the glory and beauty of his sanctuary; 7—9. to give him the honour, the worship, and the obedience due unto him, and, 10. to publish the glad tidings of his kingdom being established: 11—13. the whole creation is called upon to rejoice at this great event. We find, by 1 Chron. xvi. that David delivered out this Psalm, to be sung on occasion of temporal blessings prefigurative of future spiritual ones.

1. *O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth.*

Jehovah, our Redeemer is the person whose praises are to be sung. They are to be sung in a 'new' song; a song calculated to celebrate new mercies, prefigured by old ones wrought for Israel

in former times; a song fit for the voices of renewed and regenerate men to sing in the new Jerusalem, in those new heavens and that new earth which constitute the new creation, or kingdom of Jesus Christ. And as the mercies of God are universal, extending themselves not only to the Jews, but to all the nations of the earth, all the nations of the earth are therefore exhorted to bear a part in this new song: 'Sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord all the earth.' Thus St. John, after reckoning up the 144,000, or full number of those who were sealed to salvation from among the tribes of Israel, proceeds to tell us, that he 'beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.' All these sung a new song, which none could learn but the redeemed; they 'cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb.' See Rev. v. vii. xiv.

2. *Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; show forth his salvation from day to day.*

Again are we excited to sing unto the Lord Jesus, and in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, to bless his saving name. The latter clause of the verse is very expressive in the original, נְשַׁבְּחֵהוּ 'preach,' or, 'evangelize his salvation from day to day;' let it be the constant theme of all your discourses; publish it to the world in every possible way, by your words, and by your actions; and while God allows you breath and life, let one day

transmit the glorious employment to another, until it be resumed and continued in heaven to all eternity.

3. *Declare his glory among the heathen ; his wonders among all people.*

The 'glory' of Messiah in his incarnation, his life, his death, resurrection, ascension and kingdom, the 'wonders' or miracles by him wrought upon the bodies and souls of men ; these were the things 'declared among the heathen,' even 'among all people,' by the apostles and their successors ; these things are still declared, by the Scriptures read and sermons preached in the church, which was gathered originally from among the Gentiles.

4. *For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised ; he is to be feared above all gods.* 5. *For all the gods of the nations are idols, or, things of nought ; but the Lord made the heavens.*

Christ is to be celebrated, his glory and wonders are to be declared, because he is, in every possible sense, 'great ;' great in dignity, in power, in mercy ; and therefore 'greatly to be praised' by every creature. The heavens and heavenly bodies, adored by the nations, were no gods, but the works of 'his' hands who had fixed his everlasting throne high above them all. At the publication of the gospel, idolatry fell before it ; and what is the world itself but one great idol, which is to fall and disappear in like manner ?

6. *Honour and majesty are before him ; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.*

What are the splendour and magnificence of



earthly courts, when compared with that glory and majesty, the unutterable brightness of which fills the court of the heavenly King? Some portion of this celestial light is communicated, through grace, to the Christian church, which is described by St. John under images borrowed from the figurative sanctuary, and the earthly Jerusalem, as an edifice composed of gold and precious stones, illuminated by the glory of God and the Lamb residing in the midst of it. See Rev. xxi.

*7. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds, or, families, or, tribes, of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. 8. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. 9. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.*

In these three verses, the tribes of the spiritual Israel are enjoined to ascribe to their Redeemer all 'glory and strength,' as essentially inherent in him, and by him communicated to his people; to give him the entire 'glory of his name,' and of that 'salvation' imported by it; to bring the 'sacrifices' of the new law, and to assemble in the 'courts' of his house; to worship him in that beauty 'of holiness' which is constituted by the regular and solemn services of the church; to 'fear' and obey him, as the subjects of a King invested with plenitude of power in heaven and earth.

*10. Say among the heathen, that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.*

In other words—Make proclamation, therefore, O ye apostles and preachers of the gospel, that a

new and eternal kingdom is erected; the usurped empire of Satan is overthrown, and the Lord Jesus, having redeemed mankind, reigneth in the hearts of his people by faith; a community is formed, not upon the plan of secular policy, but upon the divine principle of heavenly love; it is established on immoveable foundations, nor shall the gates of hell prevail against it: righteousness shall dwell in it, since He, who is the King of righteousness, presides, directs, and determines all things, by his word and his Spirit.

*11. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: 12. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord.*

Transported with a view of these grand events, and beholding in spirit the advent of King Messiah; the Psalmist exults in most jubilant and triumphant strains, calling the whole creation to break forth into joy, and to celebrate the glories of redemption. The heavens, with the innumerable orbs fixed in them, which, while they roll and shine, declare the glory of beatified saints; the earth, which, made fertile by celestial influences, showeth the work of grace on the hearts of men here below; the field, which, crowned with the produce of an hundred fold, displayeth an emblem of the fruit yielded by the seed of the word in the church; the trees of the wood, lofty, verdant, and diffuse, apt representatives of holy persons, those 'trees of righteousness,' the 'planting of Jehovah,' Isa. lxi. 3, whose examples are eminent, fair, and extensive; all these are, by the prophet,

excited to join in a chorus of thanksgiving to the Maker and Redeemer of the world.

13. *For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth; he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.*

The coming of Christ is twofold; first he came to sanctify the creature, and he will come again to glorify it. Either of his kingdoms, that of grace, or that of glory, may be signified by his 'judging the world in righteousness and truth.' If creation be represented as rejoicing at the establishment of the former, how much greater will the joy be at the approach of the latter! seeing that, notwithstanding Christ be long since come in the flesh, though he be ascended into heaven, and have sent the Spirit from thence, yet, 'the whole creation, as the apostle speaks, Rom. viii. 22, 'groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, expecting to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body;' when at the renovation of all things, man, new made, shall return to the days of his youth, to begin an immortal spring, and be for ever young.

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PSALM XCVII.

ARGUMENT.—In this Psalm, 1. the reign of Christ is again celebrated, and the nations are again called to rejoice on that

account. 2—7. He is described as taking vengeance on his enemies, overthrowing idolatry in the heathen world, commanding adoration from all creatures, and, 8, 9. inspiring gladness into the church, by subduing her enemies. 10—12. The duties of holiness, thankfulness, and religious joy are inculcated.

1. *The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.*

Triumphant over death and hell, the Lord Jesus is gone up on high, and ‘reigneth.’ What greater cause can the whole earth have to ‘rejoice;’ yea, even the most distant isles of the Gentiles, to ‘be glad,’ and to sing for joy; since they are all become his subjects, and share the unspeakable blessings of so gracious a reign? We Britons, as inhabiting one of those heathen isles, and enjoying so fair a portion of evangelical blessings, have reason to repeat this verse, with a particular pleasure and energy. The Hebrews called by the name of isles, אִיִּים, not only countries surrounded by the sea, but all the countries which the sea divided from them; so that the term became synonymous with ‘Gentiles.’ Thus it is said, Isa. xlii. 4, ‘The isles shall wait for his law;’ which passage, Matt. vii. 21, is expounded as follows: ‘In him shall the Gentiles trust.’

2. *Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation, or establishment, of his throne.*

When the mercy and grace of our heavenly King are to be described, he is likened to the sun shining in a clear firmament, and gladdening universal nature with his beneficent rays. But when we are to conceive an idea of him, as going forth, in ‘justice

and judgment,' to discomfit and punish his adversaries, the imagery is then borrowed from a troubled sky; he is pictured as surrounded by 'clouds and darkness;' from whence issue lightnings and thunders, storms and tempests, affrighting and confounding the wicked and impenitent.

*3. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. 4. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw and trembled. 5. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord; at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.*

The judgments of God, and their effects upon the world are here set forth, under the usual similitude of lightning and fire from heaven, causing the earth to tremble, and the mountains to melt and dissolve away. The exaltation of Christ to the throne of his kingdom, was followed by a dreadful display of that vengeance which broke in pieces the Jewish nation, and brought their civil and religious polity to an utter dissolution. In the history of their destruction, the world of the ungodly may view a striking picture of the great and terrible day when the Lord Jesus shall render a recompence to all his enemies. He is then to descend in flaming fire; lightnings shall be his harbingers; the earth shall tremble; and the hills shall, literally, 'melt like wax at the presence of Jehovah.'

*6. The heavens declare his righteousness; and all the people see his glory.*

'The heavens,' by the manifestation of vengeance from thence, reveal, 'declare,' and proclaim, the 'righteous' judgments of Messiah; and 'all the people' upon earth are witnesses of the 'glory'

of his victory over every thing that opposeth itself to the establishment of his kingdom. This will be more eminently the case at the second advent, when the trumpet of the archangel shall proclaim his approach in the clouds of heaven, and all the tribes of the earth shall see him coming in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

*7. Confounded be, or, shall be, all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.*

When Jesus was exalted, his gospel published, and his power and glory made known in the heaven world, men grew 'ashamed' of their 'images, and boasted themselves in their idols' no more. The last clause of our verse, 'Worship him ye gods,' declares the supremacy of Christ over all that are called gods, אֱלֹהִים, in heaven and in earth, who are enjoined to pay adoration unto him, instead of claiming it for themselves.

*8. Sion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of thy judgments, O Lord. 9. For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.*

The inhabitants of the new 'Sion,' or the people of God, 'heard' the tidings, that idols and idolatry were fallen, and the Lord Jesus reigned triumphant; they heard, and 'were glad; the daughters of Judah,' or Christian churches, 'rejoiced' in the Holy Ghost, with joy unspeakable, 'because of these judgments' of their God upon his enemies, whereby he evinced himself superior to the powers of the earth, and the gods of the nations. Thus, at the fall of Babylon, it is said, Rev. xviii. 20,

'Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her.' And Eusebius speaks in the following terms, of the times under Constantine, which succeeded the overthrow of Maxentius and Maximin:—"A bright and glorious day, no cloud overshadowing it, did enlighten, with rays of heavenly light, the churches of Christ over all the earth;—and among all Christians there was an inexpressible joy, and a kind of celestial gladness." Ecclesiast. Hist. b. x.

10. *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints, he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.*

Having sung the glory of the Redeemer, the Psalmist delineates the duty of the redeemed. They are characterized by their 'love of God;' they are enjoined to 'hate evil;' this hatred is, indeed, a consequence, and a sure proof, of that love, when it is genuine and sincere. Religion must be rooted in the heart, and spring from thence. A Christian must not only serve God outwardly, but must inwardly 'love' him; he must not content himself with abstaining from overt acts of sin, but must truly 'hate' it. They who do so are 'the saints of God, whose souls he preserveth' from evil, and will finally 'deliver' from the evil one, and his associates, by a happy death, and a glorious resurrection.

11. *Light is sown for the righteous; and gladness for the upright in heart.*

However gloomy our prospects may at any time be, let us wait patiently, as the husbandman doth all the winter, in expectation of a future crop, from

the seed which lieth buried in the earth. 'Light and gladness are sown for the righteous and true hearted,' though they may not yet appear; the seed-time is in this world; the harvest will be in that to come. 'In due season we shall reap, if we faint not.' Gal. vi. 9.

12. *Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.*

Tribulation itself, therefore, should not prevent our 'rejoicing in Jehovah our righteousness,' who justifieth us from our sins; no adversity ought to make us negligent in celebrating, with thanksgiving, the 'commemorations of his holiness,' which the church hath appointed to be observed; to the end that we may always remember, with gratitude, how great things he hath done for us already, and reflect, with comfort, on those much greater things which he hath promised to do for us hereafter.

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*Nineteenth Day.—Evening Prayer.*

### PSALM XCVIII.

ARGUMENT.—In this evangelical hymn, the prophet, 1—3. extols the miracles, the victory, the salvation, the righteousness, the mercy, and truth of the Redeemer; on account of which, 4—9. he calls upon man, and the whole creation, to rejoice and praise Jehovah.

1. *O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory.*

New mercies and wonders demand new songs.  
And what mercies, what wonders can be compared



with those wrought by the holy Jesus? 'Go and tell John,' saith he to John's disciples; go and tell all the world, saith he to his own disciples, 'the things which ye see and hear;' the marvellous things which I do to the bodies and to the souls of men. 'The blind receive their sight,' and the ignorant minds are enlightened with knowledge; 'the lame walk,' and strength is communicated to impotent souls; 'the lepers are cleansed,' and the lascivious rendered chaste; 'the deaf hear,' and the obstinate listen to instruction and reproof; 'the dead are raised,' and sinners justified; 'the gospel is preached,' and the world converted. 'His own right hand and his holy arm' hath done these marvellous things, without and against all worldly power; not by spear and sword, but by patience and charity, he hath 'gotten the victory,' and gained the glorious day.

2. *The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen.*

The 'salvation' of Jehovah was 'made known' by the preaching of Christ himself in Judea, for the space of three years; his 'righteousness,' whereby sinners are justified, was 'openly showed,' by the sermons of his apostles, 'in the sight of the heathen.' Still let that salvation be made known, still let that righteousness be openly showed, by the ministers of the gospel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and the remnant of the Jews converted; until antichrist be overthrown, and death himself fallen before the all-conquering cross.

3. *He hath remembered his mercy and truth to-*

*to the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth  
in the salvation of our God.*

In sending the Messiah, God showed himself  
fulfiller of the promises, which 'mercy' prompted  
him to make, and 'truth' required him to perform.  
The promises were made to 'the house of  
Israel' to the lost sheep of that house Christ  
sent himself sent; and the apostles offered  
salvation first to the Jews: but to them it was never  
said that evangelical blessings should be con-

The prophets spake in plain terms of the  
salvation of the Gentiles, who were to be adopted into  
the Jewish family, and made the children of Abraham.  
The Gospel was accordingly preached to the nations,  
and the apostles made their progress through the world,  
and all the ends of the earth saw the salvation of  
Israel. The Jews fell from the faith of their fathers,  
and this day continue in their apostacy. And  
what of the Gentiles, in their turn, falling away,  
take the same example of unbelief? 'Remember,'  
say again, O Lord, thy 'mercy and truth to-  
ward the house of Israel;' yet once again let  
all the ends of the earth see thy salvation.'

*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the  
earth.  
Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with  
organ and the voice of a psalm. 6. With trum-  
pet and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before  
the Lord the King.*

The Psalmist, beholding in spirit the accomplish-  
ment of the promises, the advent of Christ, and  
the glory of his kingdom, thinks it criminal in any  
people to be silent; he bids the whole earth break  
into joy, and exult in God our Saviour, with

every token of gratitude and thankfulness; wi voices, and instruments of all kinds, in perfect harmony, with tempers and affections according like manner, men are enjoined to sound aloud the praises of their great Redeemer.

*7. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. 8. Let the floods clap their hands, let the hills be joyful together. Before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.*

The inanimate parts of creation are called upon to bear their parts in the new song, and to fill up the universal chorus of praise and thanksgiving, honour of him that sitteth upon the throne. O perhaps, the converted heathen nations are intended under the figures of the 'sea,' the 'rivers,' and the 'hills,' and their exultations expressed by the noise of many waters, their beauty and fruitfulness to those of the hills, when crowned with plenty, they, as it were, laugh and sing at the approach of harvest. The subject of this general joy is, as before in Psalm xcvi. 13, the advent of Messiah to reform the world, to execute judgment upon the wicked and to establish a kingdom of righteousness upon the earth. We expect his second advent to restore all things, to judge the world, to condemn his enemies, and to begin his 'glorious' reign. Then shall heaven and earth rejoice, and the joy of the redeemed shall be full.

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## PSALM XCIX.

**ARGUMENT.**—Under images borrowed from the old dispensation, the prophet celebrates, 1. the reign of Messiah, and the submission of his enemies; 2—4. his exaltation, holiness, power, and justice; which, 5. men are exhorted to acknowledge and adore. 6—9. The examples of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel are introduced, to encourage us in worshipping and serving our God and Saviour.

1. *The Lord reigneth, let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved, or, bow.*

Jehovah reigneth in the Christian church, as he did of old in the Jewish temple; when he appeared between the cherubims in the holy of holies, in the form and likeness of a man, encompassed with 'glory;' Ezek. i. 26; Numb. vii. 89; he subdued the enemies of Israel, when they raged most furiously against his people; he will also bring into subjection the adversaries of the gospel, and finally render us victorious over the powers of darkness. The passions and affections may mutiny and rebel; but if Christ reign in the heart by faith, they must soon tremble and submit.

2. *The Lord is great in Zion, and he is high above all people.* 3. *Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.*

The power and pre-eminence of the Redeemer, whom no creature is able to resist, are reasons why all should save themselves, by yielding in time to his sceptre; by taking the benefit of his protection, instead of incurring his displeasure; by 'praising his great, terrible, and holy name,' instead of suf-

fering the almighty vengeance, which he, who owns that name, can inflict.

*4. The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob. 5. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.*

For although the 'strength' of our King be infinite, yet it is never exerted, but in 'righteousness' and just 'judgment,' which are his delight: they compose the firm basis of his throne, and direct his whole administration. Impenitent rebels must feel the weight of his arm, and none can accuse the justice of their punishment: but in all other cases he is 'mighty only to save.' Isa. lxiii. 1. This holiness of his proceedings, this due temperament of justice with mercy, the redeemed are exhorted to acknowledge and to proclaim, falling down before the throne, and uttering the angelical trisagion, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.'

*6. Moses and Aaron among his priests, or, chief rulers, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and he answered them. 7. He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.*

To encourage the faithful in the worship of God, the examples of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel are adduced, men of like infirmities with ourselves, whose prayers were heard, both for themselves and others, and answers were returned to them from the mystic 'cloud,' that symbol of the divine presence, which, for a while, was itinerant with the camp in the wil-

derness, and then became fixed in the tabernacle at Shiloh till its last removal to Mount Sion. These men were heard through the intercession of the great Mediator, whom they represented. Through that same intercession our prayers also are heard, if we 'keep his testimonies, and the ordinances that he hath given us.'

8. *Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God : thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their intentions.*

The construction of the verse seems to be this : 'O Lord our God, thou didst hear, or answer them,' that is, the afore-mentioned typical mediators, Moses, Aaron, and Samuel ; 'thou becamest a forbearing God for them,' or, at their intercession ; and that, 'even when punishing,' or, when thou hadst begun to punish, 'the wicked deeds of them,' that is, not of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, but of the people, who had transgressed, and for whom they interceded. This was the case when Moses interceded for the idolaters ; Exod. xxxii. 32 ; Aaron for the schismatics ; Numb. xvi. 47 ; and Samuel for the whole nation ; 1 Sam. vii. 9. 'Pray one for another,' saith an apostle to Christians, 'that ye may be healed : the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' James, v. 16.

9. *Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill : for the Lord our God is holy.*

The Psalmist repeats his exhortation, enforced by the preceding examples of Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, and again invites all people to worship a 'holy' God in a 'holy' place, and to adore the consummate rectitude of all his proceedings, sing-

ing, with the spirits above, 'Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.' Rev. xv. 3.

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### PSALM C.

**ARGUMENT.**—The Psalmist invites all the world to join with the Israelites in the service of him who was kind and gracious to them beyond expression. Accordingly, we Christians now properly use this Psalm in acknowledgment of God's wonderful love to us in Christ; by whom we offer up continual spiritual sacrifices, for redeeming us by the sacrifice which he made of himself; for making the world anew, and creating us again unto good works; according to his faithful promise which we may depend upon for ever.—Patrick.

1. *Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands*
2. *Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.*

The prophet addresseth himself to 'all lands,' or to 'all the earth;' to Gentiles, as well as Jews. He exhorteth them to 'make a joyful noise,' a noise like that of the trumpets at the time of jubilee, sound of universal triumph and exultation, in honour of 'Jehovah,' now become their Lord and Saviour. The service of this our Master is perfect freedom: it is a service of love, a freedom from Pharaoh and the task-masters, from Satan and our own imperious lusts; it is a redemption from the most cruel bondage, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Let us therefore do as we are commanded; let us 'serve the Lord with gladness;' and when we come 'before his presence' in the temple, let it be 'with singing' to the 'praise and glory of our Redeemer

Thus he is served in heaven, and thus he delighteth to be served on earth.

3. *Know ye that the Lord he is God, it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Or, He hath made us, and we are his,<sup>1</sup> his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

The motives here urged for serving and praising Jehovah are the same with those above, in Psalm xcv. 6, 7; namely, that he is our 'God,' engaged by covenant on our behalf; that his hands created us, and have since new created us; that we stand in the peculiar relation of his 'people,' whom he hath chosen to himself, and over whom he presideth as King; that we are 'the sheep of his pasture,' for whom the good Shepherd laid down his life, and whom he nourisheth, by the word and sacraments, unto eternal life. These are points which every Christian ought to 'know' and believe, unto his soul's health. And whoever doth know them aright, will ever be ready with heart and voice to obey the injunction which followeth in the next verse.

4. *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.*

The Christian church is a temple, whose 'gates' stand continually open, for the admission of the nations from all the four quarters of the world. Rev.

<sup>1</sup> 'I am persuaded that the Masoretical correction יְהוָה (and we are his) is right: the construction and parallelism both favour it.' Bishop Lowth. A correspondent suggests—'Might not the clause be rendered interrogatively—'Are not we his people, and the sheep of his pasture?'



xxi. 13, 25. Into the 'courts' of this temple, which are now truly 'courts of the Gentiles,' all men are invited to come, and offer their evangelical sacrifices of 'confession and praise;' to express their gratitude to their Saviour, and 'bless' his gracious and hallowed 'name.' How glorious will be that day which shall behold the everlasting gates of heaven lifting up their heads, and disclosing to view those courts above, into which the children of the resurrection are to enter, there, with angels and archangels, to dwell and sing for evermore!

*5. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting: and his truth endureth to all generations.*

'Jehovah is good;' he is the source of all beauty and perfection in the creature; how altogether lovely must he needs be in himself! 'His mercy is everlasting,' extending through time into eternity; and 'his truth,' or fidelity in accomplishing his promises, 'endureth to all generations,' evidenced to the whole race of mankind, from Adam to his last born son. The Psalms which celebrate these attributes, will never, therefore, be out of date but each successive generation will chant them with fresh propriety, and fresh delight, until by saints and angels they are sung new in the kingdom of God.

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## PSALM CI.

**ARGUMENT.**—In the person of David, advanced to the throne of Israel, we hear King Messiah declaring how intended to walk, and to govern his household, the church, and also describing the qualifications which he should require in his ministers and servants.

1. *I will sing of mercy and judgment : unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.*

David, having determined to sing unto Jehovah, chooseth for his theme 'mercy and judgment;' either that mercy which God hath shown to him, and that judgment which hath been inflicted on his enemies; or else, that upright administration of mercy and judgment with which he himself intended to bless his people. The righteous administration of mercy and judgment in the kingdom of Messiah is a topic on which his subjects always expatiate with pleasure and profit. His mercy encourageth the greatest of sinners to hope; his judgments forbid the best of men to presume.

2. *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.*

In return for the favours of heaven, we hear the Israelitish monarch declaring his resolution, to set his court and kingdom an example of true wisdom and unshaken integrity; at the same time sighing for that visitation of divine grace, which alone could enable him to put his resolution in practice, 'O when wilt thou come unto me?' This was ever the voice of the church' longing for the presence of God in human nature, 'O when wilt thou come unto me?' And this must ever be the wish of a Christian, who knoweth that though in himself he be nothing, yet that he can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth him by his Spirit in the inner man. Messiah was the only King of Israel whose life held forth to his subjects a pattern of wisdom and righteousness, and whose death pro-

cured them grace, in their different measures and degrees, to follow it.

3. *I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes : I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me.*

' I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes ;' that is, I will not propose to myself, or think of carrying into execution, any iniquitous scheme of politics, however advantageous and tempting it may appear ; I will turn away my eyes and my attention, and reject it at once : ' I hate the work of them that turn aside ;' of them who, in their counsels and their actions, deviate from the divine law to serve their own interest ; ' it shall not cleave to me ;' no such corrupt principle shall adhere to my soul, or find a place in my affections. How noble a resolution for a king to make ; but how difficult an one for a king to keep ! Thou only, O King of Righteousness, didst never set any wicked thing before thine eyes ; thou only hadst a perfect aversion to the ways of transgressors.

4. *A froward heart shall depart from me : I will not know a wicked person.*

As is the king, so will be the court ; as is the master of the house, such will be those of his household. David, having resolved to ' walk within his house with a perfect,' a sincere and upright ' heart,' determines at the same time to expel from thence all whose hearts were perverted and depraved : as he would ' set no wicked thing before his eyes,' so neither would he form any connexions with ' wicked persons ;' they should not be of his

aintenance, much less should they be his favour. In the same manner speaketh our heavenly King, with regard to the appointment of his ministers and servants:—‘I know you not, whence you ; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.’ *Isa. lxi. 27.*

*Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him I cut off: him that hath an high look, and a proud, or, extended, and therefore, insatiable, heart, not I suffer.*

Detraction, ambition, and avarice are three vices which spring and flourish in the rich soil of court. The Psalmist declareth his resolution to undertake the difficult task of eradicating them, to the benefit of his people, that Israelites might not be harassed by informers, or oppressed by insolent and rapacious ministers. Shall we imagine these vices less odious in the eyes of that King whose character was composed of humility and meekness? or will Christ admit those tempers into the court of heaven which David determined to exclude from his court upon earth?

*Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.*

The ‘eyes’ of princes cannot be better employed than in looking around them, in order to choose, from among their own subjects, fit and able men to transact the public business; men of inviolable fidelity, and unshaken integrity; men who know how to think aright, and how to speak what they think; men likewise who ‘walk in the perfect way’ of holiness, who do not disgrace their politics by

their lives, or prejudice their master's cause by their sins, more than they can ever advance it by their abilities. Bishops may be called the 'eyes' of Christ; they are to 'overlook' his people, and we pray him at the seasons of ordination, "so to guide and govern their minds, that they may faithfully and wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of the church."

*7. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.*

To purge a court of 'deceit' and 'falsehood,' was a resolution worthy king David, worthy the representative of him who styleth himself the Truth, from whose heavenly palace and city will be for ever excluded, as St. John informeth us, 'who-soever loveth and maketh a lie.' Rev. xxii. 15.

*8. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land: that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.*

Every earthly prince should consider himself as raised to a throne, and invested with power, "for the punishment of wickedness and vice, and the maintenance of God's true religion and virtue." 'Early,' therefore, in the 'morning' of his reign, he should set about the work of reformation, that so the blessings of heaven may descend upon himself and his people, according to the infallible promises of the Most High. And let each individual, in like manner, and for the same reason, be zealous and diligent to reform his own heart and ways, ever mindful of that future most awful morning when the King of Righteousness shall 'cut off,

with the sword of eternal judgment, 'all wicked doers from that city of Jehovah,' the new and heavenly Jerusalem.

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*Twentieth Day.—Morning Prayer.*

PSALM CII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm is entitled 'A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.' It seems to have been written during the captivity, by one of the prophets, who, like Daniel in parallel circumstances, 1, 2. maketh supplication before his God, 3—11. setteth forth, in the most affecting strains, his wretched and sorrowful estate, or rather, perhaps, that of Jerusalem, which he personates; 12. he comforteth himself, by reflecting on the eternity and immutability of Jehovah; 13—22. he predicteth and describeth the restoration of Sion, with her enlargement by the accession of the Gentiles, when Messiah shall have visited and redeemed her; 23, 24. he returneth again to his lamentations; but 25—28. again reposeth his confidence on him who created all things, and who would not fail to make good his word and promise, if not to the generation then present, yet to their posterity. This is the fifth of those styled 'Penitential Psalms;' and St. Paul, Heb. i. 10, hath asserted, that it is addressed to the eternal Son of God, and Saviour of the world.

1. *Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee.* 2. *Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call, answer me speedily.*

Sin and sorrow force 'prayers' and 'cries' from the sons of Adam. The first petition here preferred is, that these prayers and cries may be 'heard' in heaven. The day of human life is 'a day of trouble,' a day of darkness and gloominess, which

nothing can brighten, but the light of God's 'countenance;' nothing can render comfortable, but a 'speedy answer' of mercy and peace from above.

3. *For my days are consumed away like, or, in, smoke, and my bones are burnt as an hearth, or, a firebrand.*

The effects of extreme grief on the human frame are compared to those which fire produceth upon fuel. It exhausts the radical moisture, and, by so doing, soon consumes the substance. A man's time and his strength evaporate in melancholy, and his 'bones,' those pillars and supports of his body, become like wood, on which the fire hath done its work, and left it without sap, and without cohesion. A single penitent, or a whole church, bewailing their respective transgressions, when under the rod of God, may use these words, and will understand the force of them.

4. *My heart is smitten and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.*

The metaphor is continued, and the 'heart' itself, out of which flow the streams of life, is represented as suffering that from grief which the 'grass' of the field suffers from the burning heat of the sun: it is 'smitten and withered.' And when grief hath thus dejected the spirits, the man has no appetite for that food which is to recruit and elevate them. Ahab, smitten with one kind of grief, David with another, and Daniel with a third, all 'forgot,' or 'refused to eat their bread:' 1 Kings, xxi. 4; 2 Sam. xii. 16; Dan. x. 3. Such natural companions are 'mourning and fasting.'

*5. By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin.*

Extremity of sorrow causeth the flesh to waste, and the bones to press upon the skin, through which they are ready to force their way. Sickness is the chastisement of heaven, inflicted often upon us to supply the want of that discipline which we should exercise upon ourselves. 'For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.' 1 Cor. xi. 31.

*6. I am like the pelican of the wilderness : I am like an owl, or, bittern, of the desert, or, of waste, ruinous places. 7. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top.*

The sorrowful man is naturally desirous of retiring from the world, to vent his complaints in solitude, and to pass the nights in watchfulness and prayer. In such a situation the true penitent placeth himself, worthily to bewail his sins, and deprecate the judgments of his God. And in such a situation did captivity place the daughter of Sion, that she might do likewise. The use which Daniel made of it for this purpose may be seen in his ninth chapter.

*8. Mine enemies reproach me all the day : and they that are mad against me, are sworn against me.*

The scoffs and reproaches of men are generally added to the chastisements of God ; or rather, perhaps, are a part, and sometimes the bitterest part of them. How the enemies of Jerusalem behaved in the day of her calamity, is well known. How



carnal and ungodly men behave to a penitent, when mourning for his sins, under the afflicting hand of heaven, is as well known.

*9. For, or, Therefore, I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping. 10. Because of thine indignation and wrath; for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.*

By 'eating ashes and drinking tears,' we may understand the same as if it had been said, 'I have eaten the bread of humiliation, and drank the water of affliction;' ashes being the emblem of one, and tears the consequence of the other; while the actions of 'eating and drinking,' intimate to us the fulness and satiety which the sufferer had experienced of both, from the 'wrath and indignation of God.' Prosperity and adversity are from him: 'he lifteth up, and he casteth down;' he lifteth up Jerusalem above all the earth; and he cast her down, to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles.

*11. My days are like a shadow that declineth: and I am withered like grass. 12. But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations.*

A 'shadow' never continueth in one stay, but is still gliding imperceptibly on, lengthening as it goes, and at last vanisheth into darkness. The period of its existence is limited to a day at furthest. The rising sun gives it birth, and in that moment when the sun sets it is no more. The 'grass' of the field, in like manner, hath a being of the same duration. In the morning, clothed with verdure and beauty, refresheth and delighteth the eye of the beholder; but the evening findeth it cut down,

dried up, and withered. Such is the life of man, sojourning in the land of his captivity, and doing penance for his sins. But the eternity of Jehovah, the infallibility of his promises, and the remembrance of his former works and mercies, comfort our hearts, and encourage us to hope, nay, even to rejoice, in the midst of sorrow and tribulation.

13. *Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Sion ; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come.*  
14. *For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.*

From this passage, and what follows, it appears that the suppliant, in this Psalm, bewails not only his own miseries, but those of the church. Israel was in captivity, and Sion a desolation. A 'time' notwithstanding, a 'set time,' there was at hand, when God had promised to 'arise, and to have mercy upon her.' The bowels of her children yearned over her ruins ; they longed to see her rebuilt, and were ready, whenever the word of command should be given, to set heart and hand to the blessed work. Such ought to be our affection towards our Sion, however afflicted and destitute she may, at any time, appear to be ; such should be our faith in the promises of God concerning the future glorification of his church, at the time appointed.

15. *So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord : and all the kings of the earth thy glory.* 16. *When the Lord shall build up Sion, he shall appear in his glory.* 17. *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.*

The object to which the prophets of old had chiefly respect, was not only the deliverance of

Israel from Babylon, and the rebuilding of the material temple, but the salvation of sinners, and the erection of the Christian church, in the days of Messiah's kingdom. 'When the Lord' Jesus thus 'built up Sion, he appeared in his glory: the heathen feared his name, and all the kings of the earth' adored his majesty, because he had 'regarded the prayer of the destitute' sons of Adam, in their worse than Babylonish captivity, and had arisen himself to be their Saviour and mighty Deliverer. We, in these latter days, look and pray for the second appearance of the same Redeemer, with power and great glory, to raise the dead, and to build up from the dust a Jerusalem which shall experience no more vicissitudes, but continue for ever in unchangeable beauty and brightness.

*18. This shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.*

The history of 'this' redemption and restoration by Messiah, thus foretold, hath been 'written' in the Gospel for the benefit of 'after generations,' to the end that 'the people who are created' anew in Christ Jesus may, from age to age, praise Jehovah, in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs; as it is done at this day in the church, and ever will continue to be done, till the choirs of heaven and earth shall be united before the throne of the Lamb.

*19. For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary: from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; 20. To hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed to death; 21. To declare the name of the Lord in Sion, and his praise in Jerusalem; 22.*

*When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.*

Redemption is the subject of praise in the Christian church ; and the process of that great work is here described by images borrowed from the temporal deliverance and restoration of Israel. God is represented as looking with an eye of pity from heaven upon poor mankind ; as hearing the groans of sinners, fast bound in the chains of their sins, and sentenced to death eternal ; as coming down to forgive and to release them ; that, being so forgiven and released, they might cause the church to resound with his praises, when, upon the preaching of the gospel, it should be filled with converts assembled from every people and kingdom of the world. Look down, O Lord Jesu, yet once again upon thy servants, still under the dominion of death, and the bondage of corruption ; loose these chains, even these also, O Lord, and bring us forth into the glorious liberty of thy children ; that, with the whole assembly of the redeemed, in the heavenly Jerusalem, we may bless and praise thy name for ever and ever.

*23. He weakened my strength in the way ; he shortened my days.*

The prophet, in the person of captive Sion, having, from verse 13 to verse 22, expressed his faith and hope in the promised redemption, now returns to his mournful complaints, as at verse 11. Israel doubteth not of God's veracity, but feareth lest his heavy hand should crush the generation then in being, before they should behold the expiration of their troubles. They were in ' the way,' but their ' strength' was so ' weakened,' and their ' days

shortened,' that they almost despaired of holding out to their journey's end. A sore trial hath the Christian church to undergo in the last days, before the second advent of her Lord and Saviour. Strong faith and invincible patience will be necessary to enable her to endure until the end shall come.

*24. And I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations.*

Israel prayeth that the holy seed might not be extirpated, and perish by a kind of untimely death, ere yet the promise had been made good, and Sion had seen the salvation of her God. Every man hath reason to pray, that God would not 'take him away in the midst of his days,' or call upon him when unprepared; but that time may be allowed him to perfect his repentance, and to work out his salvation.

*25. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands.  
26. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.  
27. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.*

Amidst the changes and chances of this mortal life, one topic of consolation will ever remain, namely, the eternity and immutability of God our Saviour, of him who was, and is, and is to come. Kingdoms and empires may rise and fall; nay, the heavens and the earth, as they were originally produced and formed by the Word of God the Son, or second person in the Trinity, to whom the Psalmist

here addresseth himself, see Heb. i. 10; so will they, at the day appointed, be folded up and laid aside, as an old and worn-out garment; or, if the substance remain, the present form and fashion of them will perish, and they will be utterly changed and altered from the state in which they now are. But Jehovah is ever the same; his years have no end, nor can his promise fail, any more than himself. 'Heaven and earth,' saith he, 'shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.' Matt. xxiv. 35.

*28. The children of thy servants shall continue; and their seed shall be established before thee.*

Whatever be the fate of the present generation, whether they may live to see the accomplishment of all that has been foretold or not, yet the word of God standeth sure; there shall be always a church, and a holy seed, to whom the promises shall be made good. They have already been fulfilled with regard to the advent of Messiah, and the vocation of the Gentiles. The events which are behind will be brought forward and come to pass in their seasons, until the counsel of God shall be finished, and every prediction receive its full accomplishment in the glorification of the redeemed.

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### PSALM CIII.

**ARGUMENT.**—In this evangelical and most comfortable hymn, David, after, 1, 2. exciting himself to the work, 3—5. praiseth Jehovah for the mercies of redemption; 6, 7. celebrateth his goodness to Moses and Israel; 8—13. setteth forth

the divine philanthropy, under various beautiful expressions and images; 14—16. describeth, in a manner wonderfully affecting, man's frail and perishable state; but, 17, 18. leadeth him, for consolation, to the everlasting mercy of God in Christ, the stability of whose throne and kingdom, 19. he declareth, and, 20—22. calleth upon heaven and earth to join with him in blessing and praising his holy name.

*1. Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name.*

The Psalmist, about to utter a song of praise, first endeavours to awaken and stir up his 'soul' to the joyful task. He calleth forth all his powers and faculties, 'all that is within him,' that every part of his frame may glorify its Saviour; that the understanding may know him, the will choose him, the affections delight in him, the heart believe in him, and the tongue confess him. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.'

*2. Bless the Lord, O, my soul, and forget not all his benefits.*

Thanksgiving cannot be sincere and hearty, unless a man bear impressed upon his mind, at the time, a quick sense of 'benefits' received; and 'benefits' we are most of us apt to 'forget;' those especially, which are conferred upon us by God. Therefore David repeateth his self-awakening call, and summoneth all his powers of recollection, that none of the divine favours might continue unnoticed and unacknowledged. A catalogue of such particular mercies, temporal and spiritual, as each individual hath experienced through life, might be of service, to refresh the memory upon this important head.

*3. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thine infirmities.*

At the head of God's mercies must for ever stand 'remission of sin,' or that full and free pardon purchased for us by Jesus Christ, whereby, if we truly repent and believe in him, our transgressions, though ever so many, and ever so great, are done away, and become as if they had never been; from a state of guilt we pass into one of justification, from a state of enmity into one of reconciliation, from a state of servitude into one of liberty and sonship. Next to the pardon of sin, considered as a crime, we are to commemorate the cure of it, considered as a disease, or indeed as a complication of diseases:—'Who healeth all thine infirmities.' The body experienceth the melancholy consequences of Adam's offence, and is subject to many 'infirmities;' but the soul is subject to as many. What is pride, but lunacy? what is anger, but a fever? what is avarice, but a dropsy? what is lust, but a leprosy? what is sloth, but a dead palsy? Perhaps there are spiritual maladies similar to all corporeal ones. When Jesus Christ was upon earth, he proved himself the physician of men's souls, by the cures which he wrought upon their bodies. It is he alone who 'forgiveth all our iniquities;' it is he alone who 'healeth all our infirmities.' And the person who findeth his sin 'cured,' hath a well-grounded assurance that it is 'forgiven.'

4. *Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth, or, encircleth, thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.*

Man hath two 'lives;' he is, therefore, subject to a double 'destruction;' and, consequently, capable of a two-fold 'redemption.' He who is recovered from sickness, and thereby redeemed from that destruction which natural death bringeth upon



the body, will undoubtedly sing this strain in transports of gratitude; and he ought so to do. But what will be the sensations of him who celebrates, in the same words, the spiritual redemption of his soul from death and destruction everlasting? How is he 'crowned' with the 'loving kindness' of Jehovah; how is he 'encircled' by the arms of 'mercy!' 'Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour:' never ending 'length of days;' true 'riches,' that abide for ever; and 'the honour which cometh from God only.'

*5. Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

It is God who giveth us the 'good things' of this world, and who giveth us likewise an appetite and a taste to enjoy them. It is God who restoreth a body, emaciated by sickness, to bloom, vigour, and agility. And he doth greater things than these. He 'satisfieth' all the desires of the soul with a banquet of spiritual dainties, and bestoweth on her a relish for the same. By the renovating power of his Spirit, he restoreth her from decrepitude, to the health and strength of a young 'eagle;' so that she can ascend up on high, and contemplate

<sup>1</sup> Of all birds it is known that they have yearly their mouling times, when they shed their old, and are fresh furnished with a new stock of feathers. This is most observable of hawks and vultures, and especially of 'eagles,' which, when they are near an hundred years old, cast their feathers, and become bald and like young ones, and then new feathers sprout forth. Thus St. Ambrose, "*Aquila longam ætatem ducit, dum vetustis plumis fatiscens, novâ pennarum successione juvenescit.*" Dr. Hammond.

the splendour of the Sun of Righteousness. Thus, at the day of the resurrection, clothed anew with salvation and glory, the body likewise shall arise from earth, and fly away as an eagle toward heaven, to begin an immortal life, and be for ever young.

6. *The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.* 7. *He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.*

From a consideration of his own particular case, the Psalmist maketh a general reflection on that attribute of God, which inclineth him to deliver his people, and to punish their oppressors, of what kind soever they be. And here that grand display of the 'ways' and 'works' of Jehovah, the redemption of 'Israel' by the hand of 'Moses,' immediately occurs, and is celebrated. Thus each private mercy, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature, should remind us of that public and universal blessing of redemption by Jesus Christ, from which every other blessing floweth, as a stream from its fountain, and for which God ought, therefore, upon all occasions, to be praised and glorified.

8. *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*

When Moses desired Jehovah to show him his 'way' and his 'glory,' Exod. xxxiii. 13, 18, Jehovah passed by, and proclaimed himself, as here, 'Jehovah, merciful and gracious,' &c. Exod. xxxiv. 6. How full of consolation to the penitent soul are all the words of this verse! 'The Lord is merciful,' רַחוּם, the bowels of his tender compassion yearn over us, as those of a mother yearn over the child of

her womb; 'yea, the woman may forget her sucking child, yet can he not forget us:' Isa. xlix. 15. He is 'gracious,' רַחוּם, ready to give us freely all things that are needful for our salvation. He is 'slow to anger,' bearing with the frowardness of his children, with their provocations and relapses for forty, fifty, sixty, seventy years together, before he strikes the blow; giving them, by this his long-suffering, time for repentance. And he is 'plenteous in mercy,' רַחוּם, 'great, mighty in mercy,' placing his chief glory in this attribute, and hereby teaching us how to estimate true greatness.

9. *He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.* 10. *He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*

God's chastisements are some of the most eminent proofs of his mercy. They are sent to reclaim us, and to save us from eternal punishment. They continue not always, but are removed when they have done their work; and while they last, are as nothing in comparison of those heavy stripes which our sins have deserved.

11. *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him.* 12. *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.* 13. *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.*

We are here presented with three of the most beautiful, apposite, and comforting similitudes in the world. When we lift up our eyes, and behold around us the lofty and stupendous vault of heaven, encircling, protecting, enlightening, refreshing, and

berishing the earth, and all things that are therein, we are bidden to contemplate in this glass the immeasurable height, the boundless extent, and the salutary influences of that mercy which, as it were, embraceth the creation, and is over all the works of God. Often as we view the sun arising in the east, and darkness flying away from before his face towards the opposite quarters of the heavens, we may see an image of that goodness of Jehovah, whereby we are placed in the regions of illumination, and our sins are removed and put far away out of his sight. And that our hearts may, at all times, have confidence towards God, he is represented as bearing towards us the fond and tender affection of 'a father,' every ready to defend, to nourish, and to provide for us, to bear with us, to forgive us, and to receive us in the parental arms of everlasting love.

14. *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.* 15. *As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.* 16. *For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.*

The consideration of man's frail and perishable estate weighs with the Almighty, and prevails upon him to spare his creature. And doth not the tear of compassion start in the eye of him who reads the description which David hath given of it in these verses? 'Man,' fallen man, mortal man—'his days are as grass;' like that he cometh out of the earth, and continueth but a short time upon it; 'as a flower of the field,' fair but transient, 'so he' unfoldeth his beauty in youth, and 'flourisheth' a while in the vigour of manhood; but lo, in a

moment, the breath of heaven's displeasure blighting 'wind passeth over him, and he is he boweth his drooping head, and mingled with his native dust; his friends and his kinsmen look for him at the accustomed spot he once adorned—but in vain—the ear opened her mouth to receive him, and 'he shall know him no more.'

*17. But the mercy of the Lord is from ever to everlasting upon them that fear him; and righteousness unto children's children: 18. As keep his covenant, and to those that remember commandments to do them.*

Let not man presume, who withereth like green herb; but then, let not man despair. Nature, with all its infirmities, the Son of God taken upon him. The flower which faded in Adam, blooms anew in Christ, never to fade. 'The mercy of Jehovah,' in his Messiah, 'is everlasting;' and of that everlasting mercy, poor man is the object. It extendeth to all the generations of the faithful servants of God. Death not deprive them of its benefits, nor shall it hide them from the efficacious influence of enlivening beams, which shall pierce even into regions of desolation, and awaken the sleeping six thousand years. Man must pay to just temporal penalty of his sins; but mercy raise him again, to receive the eternal life purchased by his Saviour's righteousness. The passage in the First Epistle of St. Peter does admirably illustrate this part of our Psalm. We are born again not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which live

hideth for ever. For all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.' 1 Pet. i. 23, &c.

19. *The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.*

The glorious person who worketh all these wonders of mercy for his people, the Word of God, and Saviour of the world, is triumphantly seated upon his 'throne in heaven,' and is possessed of all power to accomplish his will, even until all things shall be subdued unto him. The glories of his throne, the brightness of his excellent majesty, and the might of his irresistible power, are described at large by St. John, Rev. iv. v. xix.

20. *Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.* 21. *Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.* 22. *Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul.*

Joy is observed to be of a diffusive and communicative nature. The heart of the Psalmist is full and overfloweth with it. Unable worthily to praise Jehovah for his mercies vouchsafed to the church, he inviteth heaven and earth to join with him, and to celebrate in full chorus, the redemption of man. St. John saw the throne of Messiah prepared; he beheld the universal band assembled; and he heard when 'all the angels round about the throne, an thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of

thousands, with every creature in heaven, ear and sea,' lifted up their voices and sang togeth ' Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and ur the Lamb, for ever and ever.'

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*Twentieth Day.—Evening Prayer.*

PSALM CIV.

ARGUMENT.—This is an eucharistic hymn, full of majesty and sweetness, addressed to Jehovah, as Creator of the world. It setteth forth his glory, wisdom, goodness, and power, 1—9. in the formation of the heavens and earth; 10—18. in the various provision made for beasts, and birds, and for man, the lord of all; 19—24. in the revolutions of celestial bodies, and the consequent interchanges of day and night, of labour and rest; 25, 26. in the sea, and every thing that moveth in or upon the waters. 27—30. The dependence of the whole creation upon God for its being and well being is beautifully represented, with, 31, 32. the glory which the Creator receiveth from his works, the pleasure which he taketh in them, and the power which he hath over them. 33. The Psalmist declareth his resolution ever to praise Jehovah, and 34. predicteth the destruction of those who refuse or neglect to do. As there is a similitude between the natural and spiritual creation, allusions of that sort are frequently made in the ensuing comment, which may, perhaps, point out the reason why the church hath appointed this Psalm to be used on Whitsunday.

1. *Bless the Lord, O my soul: O Lord my God thou art very great, thou art clothed with honour and majesty; Heb. with glory and beauty.* 2. *Thou coverest thyself with light as with a garment; thou stretchest out the heavens like a curtain, i. e. a tent, or, pavilion.*

The Scriptures inform us, that the same person who redeemed the world did also create it. In the hundreth and second Psalm, as we are assured by St. Paul, 'to the Son it is said, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands.' To him, therefore, as Creator, is the hundreth and fourth Psalm likewise addressed. He is described as invested with 'the glory which he had with the Father before the world was;' a glimpse of which he vouchsafed to the three disciples, who were present at his transfiguration, when 'his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.' The first instance of his creating power is afforded us by the 'heavens,' which form a magnificent 'canopy, or pavilion,' comprehending within the earth, and all the inhabitants thereof. It is enlightened by the celestial orbs suspended in it, as the holy tabernacle was by the lamps of the golden candlestick, and it was originally framed, erected, and furnished by its Maker, with more ease than man can construct and pitch a 'tent' for his own temporary abode. Yet must this noble pavilion also be taken down; these resplendent and beautiful heavens must pass away, and come to an end. How glorious then shall be those 'new heavens,' which are to succeed them, and to endure for ever!

3. *Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind.*

The divine Architect is here represented as 'laying the beams of his chambers,' as compacting his lofts or stories, 'in the waters.' Some think the



formation of the terrestrial strata in the waters, which at the beginning covered all things, is here alluded to. If it be objected, that the Psalmist, in the course of his description, is not yet arrived at the formation of the earth, but is still in the upper regions of the air; may we not suppose that the subject is, in this particular, a little anticipated, which is no uncommon case in the sacred writings? The generality of expositors, however, interpret the passage of those 'dark waters, compacted into thick clouds of the skies,' which the Almighty is elsewhere said to make the 'secret place, or chamber' of his residence, and a kind of 'footstool' to his throne. Ps. xviii. 9, 11. And thus, indeed; the former part of our verse is plainly and immediately connected with what follows; 'who maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind.' How astonishingly magnificent and tremendous is the idea which these words convey to us, of the great King riding upon the heavens, encompassed with clouds and darkness, attended by the lightnings, those ready executioners of his vengeance, and causing the world to resound and tremble at the thunder of his power, and the noise of his chariot wheels! By these ensigns of royalty, these emblems of omnipotence, and instruments of his displeasure, doth Jehovah manifest his presence, when he visiteth rebellious man; to make him own and adore his neglected and insulted Lord. See and compare Ps. xviii. 10, and the context.

4. *Who maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire.*

From the manner in which these words are introduced, and the place where they stand, one should

conceive the meaning of them to be, that God employeth the elements of air and fire and the winds, מרר, and the lightnings, as his messengers, מלאכיו, and ministers to execute his commands upon the earth.<sup>1</sup> But the apostle, Heb. i. 7, informeth us, that they have a further reference to immaterial angels; either because those angels often appeared in the likeness, or because they were endued with the properties of 'wind and flame.' Intellectual beings of the highest order in the realms above, are as ready to fulfil the word of Jehovah as are the elements of this lower world. Both teach a lesson of obedience to the sons of men; those of them, more especially, who are appointed 'angels' of the churches, and 'ministers' of Christ.

*5. Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.*

In the original it is, 'Who hath founded the earth upon its bases.' The formation of this globe on which we tread, is a wonderful instance of divine wisdom and power, whether we consider the manner in which the parts of it are put and kept together, or its suspension in the circumambient fluid, which, as some philosophers suppose, by pressing upon it on every side, forms so many columns, as it were, to support and keep it balanced. The words, 'that it should not be removed for ever,' do by no means imply, that the earth is stationary, or that it is eternal; but only thus much, that it is so constructed as to answer the end, and to last the time for which it was created and in-

<sup>1</sup> In the French translation it is—'Who maketh the winds his angels, the flaming fire his ministers.'

tended. It shall continue the same in itself, with relation to other bodies, neither altering shape, nor changing its course, till the day appointed for its dissolution; after which, as there shall be 'new heavens,' so will there also be a 'new earth.'

6. *Thou coveredst it with the deep, as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled: at the voice of thy thunders they hasted away.* 8. *They go, or, went, up by the mountains: they go, or, went, down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.* 9. *Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass: that they turn not again to cover the earth.*

Most interpreters suppose this to be a description of the situation of things, and of what was effected by the power of God, on the third day of the creation, when he said, 'Let the waters be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so.' Indeed, the process of creation was so exactly similar to that at the deluge, with regard to the circumstances here mentioned, that it matters not to which we apply the beautiful and truly poetical passage before us. In both cases, the earth was covered with the waters, as with a garment, in every part; in both cases, they fled: the Almighty word, like the scattered remains of a routed army; from the heights of mountains, whither they had ascended, they sunk down into the valleys; from the valleys they retired to the bed of the ocean, and a part of them descended from thence into the great deep that lieth beneath. Bounds were set to them, beyond which they should never pass, nor overwhelm us any more for ever. And the

rience of four thousand years hath taught us, that where the Creator hath laid his commands, plain sand is a sufficient barrier. Thus the church hath been delivered from her spiritual enemies; and she hath a promise, on which she may with full confidence rely, that 'the gates of hell shall never prevail against her.'

10. *He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.* 11. *They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst.*

The waters of the sea are not only prevented from destroying the earth, but, by a wonderful machinery, are rendered the means of preserving every living thing which moveth thereon. Partly ascending from the great depth through the strata of the earth, partly exhaled in vapour from the surface of the ocean into the air, and from thence falling in rain, especially on the tops and by the sides of mountains, they break forth in fresh springs, having left their salts behind them; they trickle through the valleys, between the hills, receiving new supplies as they go; they become large rivers, and after watering, by their innumerable turnings and windings, immense tracts of country, they return to the place from whence they came. Thus every animal hath an opportunity of quenching that thirst which must otherwise soon put a period to its existence. The 'wild asses' are particularly mentioned, because they live in remote and sandy deserts; yet even such creatures, in such places, are by the God of nature taught the way to the waters; insomuch that the parched traveller, when in search of a fountain, findeth them to be the best guides in the world, and needeth only to observe

and follow the herds of them descending to streams. In the spiritual system, or new creation there are wells of salvation, living springs, wells of comfort, of which all nations, even the most savage and barbarous, are invited to come and drink freely. They flow among the churches; they descend into the hearts of the lowly; and they refresh us in the passage through the wilderness: for there 'do waters break out, and streams in the desert.' Isa. xxxv. 6.

12. *By them shall the fowls of the air have their habitation, which sing among the branches.*

'By them,' that is, by 'springs of water,' in 'valleys,' the birds delight to have their habitation and to sing amidst the verdant branches where they conceal them from our sight. "The music of birds as one hath well observed, " was the first song of thanksgiving which was offered on earth before man was formed. All their sounds are different, but all harmonious, and all together compose a choir which we cannot imitate."<sup>1</sup> If these little choristers, the birds of the air, when refreshed by the streams near which they dwell, express their gratitude by chanting in their way, the praises of their Maker and Preserver, how ought Christians to blush, who, besides the comforts and conveniences of this world, are abundantly supplied with copious draughts of the water of eternal life, if, for so great blessings, they pay not the tribute of thanksgiving, and sing not unto the Lord the songs of Sion! "He that at midnight, when the very labourer sleeps securely, should hear, as he has often done, the clear airs, the sweet descanting

<sup>1</sup> Wesley's Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation, i. 149.

the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of the nightingale's voice, might well be lifted above earth, and say, Lord, what music hast thou provided for the saints in heaven, when thou affordest bad men such music upon earth!" Walton's Complete Angler, p. 9.

13. *He watereth the hills from his chambers : the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.* 14. *He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man : that he may bring forth food out of the earth ;* 15. *And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread, which strengtheneth man's heart.*

The fertility of the earth is owing to God, who for that purpose 'watereth' it, מַעֲלִייתִי, 'from his chambers,' whether the word hath a reference to the clouds above, or the depths below, for both are concerned in the operation. Hence all the glory and beauty of the vegetable world ; hence the grass, which nourisheth the cattle, that they may nourish the human race ; hence the green herb, for food and for medicine ; hence fields covered with corn, for the support of life ; hence vines and olive-trees laden with fruits, whose juices exhilarate the heart, and brighten the countenance. Nor let us forget the spiritual benedictions corresponding to these external ones ; the fruitfulness of the church through grace, the bread of everlasting life, the cup of salvation, and the oil of gladness.

16. *The trees of the Lord are full of sap ; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted.*

The whole earth is a garden, planted by the hand, and watered by the care of Jehovah. But in a more

especial manner is his glory set forth by the lofty and magnificent cedars, which, growing wild on the mountain and in the forest, owe nothing to the skill and industry of man. The moisture of the earth, rarefied by the heat of the sun, enters their roots, ascends in their tubes, and by due degrees expands and increases them, till they arrive at their growth. God hath also another garden, in which there are other trees of his planting, called by Isaiah, ch. lxi. 3, ‘trees of righteousness.’ These are his faithful servants, who, through the Spirit which is given unto them, become eminent and steady in goodness; their examples are fragrant, and their charity diffusive.

17. *Where the birds make their nests : as for the stork, the fir-trees are her house.*

Most admirable is that wisdom and understanding which the Creator hath imparted to the birds of the air, whereby they distinguish times and seasons, choose the properest places, construct their nests with an art and exactness unattainable by man, and secure and provide for their young. “Is it for the birds, O Lord, who have no knowledge thereof, that thou hast joined together so many miracles? Is it for the men who give no attention to them? Is it for those who admire them, without thinking of thee? Rather is it not thy design, by all these wonders, to call us to thyself? to make us sensible of thy wisdom, and fill us with confidence in thy bounty, who watchest so carefully over these inconsiderable creatures, two of which are sold for a farthing?”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wesley, as above.

18. *The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats, and the rocks for the conies.*

The same force of what we call instinct prevails in terrestrial animals, and directs them to places of refuge, where they may be safe from their enemies. Thus the wild goats climb with ease to the tops and crags of mountains, where they deposit their young. And thus animals of another kind, which are more defenceless than the goats, and not able to climb like them, have yet a way of intrenching themselves, in a situation perfectly impregnable, among the rocks;¹ we find them on that account, numbered by Solomon among the 'four' kinds of animals, which, though 'little upon the earth, are exceeding wise. The שפנים are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.' Prov. xxx. 26. They who in themselves are 'feeble' and helpless, should look out betimes for a mountain of refuge, and a rock of safety.

19. *He appointeth the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.*

From a survey of the works of God upon earth, the Psalmist proceedeth to extol that divine wisdom which is manifested in the motions and revolutions of the heavenly bodies, and in the grateful vicissitude of day and night occasioned thereby. A beautiful passage in the book of Ecclesiasticus will, perhaps, be the best comment on the former part of this verse: 'He made the moon to serve in her

¹ It is uncertain what species of animals is here intended by the word שפנים. But it is enough for our purpose, that they are creatures remarkable for securing themselves in the manner here mentioned.



season, for a declaration of times, and a sign to the world. From the moon is the sign of feasts, a light that decreaseth in her perfection. The month is called after her name, increasing wonderfully in her changing, being an instrument of the armies above, shining in the firmament of heaven; the beauty of heaven, the glory of the stars, an ornament giving light in the highest places of the Lord:’ ch. xlii. 6. The latter part of the verse expresseth the obedience of the ‘sun,’ or ‘solar light,’ to the law of its Creator; it seemeth to ‘know’ the exact time of its coming on, and going off, and fulfilleth the course prescribed to it without the least deviation. O that we who are endowed with sense and reason, could in like manner fulfil our course; and that God’s will were ‘done on earth,’ as it is even ‘in’ this lower and material ‘heaven!’

*20. Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. 21. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.*

Night and darkness invite the wild beasts of the forest and desert from their dens and recesses, to ‘seek’ the ‘prey’ allotted them by the providence of that God who feedeth the young lions, as well as the young ravens, when hunger enforceth them, as it were, to call upon him. Thus, when a nation hath filled up the measure of its iniquities, the Sun of Righteousness knoweth the time of his departure from it; the light of the gospel is darkened, and a horrible night succeeds: the executioners of

vengeance are in motion, and a commission from above is given them to seize upon the prey.

22. *The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.* 23. *Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour, until the evening.*

At the return of day, the sons of ravage retire, and sculk away to their several hiding-places, that man, the lord of the creation, may arise, and perform, unmolested, the task which his Maker hath appointed him. When the light of truth and righteousness shineth, error and iniquity fly away before it, and the 'roaring' lion himself departeth for a time. Then the Christian goeth forth to the work of his salvation and to his labour of love, until the evening of old age warns him to prepare for his last repose, in faith of a joyful resurrection.

24. *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.*

Transported with a survey of the wonders which present themselves in heaven above, and on earth below, the Psalmist breaks forth into an exclamation (and what heart hath not already anticipated him?) on the variety and magnificence, the harmony and proportion, of the works of God, in this outward, and visible, and perishable world. What then are the miracles of grace and glory? What are those invisible and eternal things, which God hath prepared for them that love him, in another and a better world, and of which the things visible and temporary are no more than shadows? Admitted to that place, where we shall at once be

indulged with a view of all the divine dispensations, and of that beatitude in which they terminate, shall we not, with angels and archangels, (out, 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! wisdom hast thou made them all; heaven and earth are full of thy riches, and of thy glory!'

25. *So is this great and wide sea, wherein things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts, or, living creatures.* 26. *There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to pounce therein.*

There is not in all nature a more august and striking object than the ocean. Its inhabitants are as numerous as those upon the land, nor is the wisdom and power of the Creator less displayed, perhaps, in their formation and preservation, from the smallest fish that swims, to the enormous tyrant of the deep, the leviathan himself. By means of navigation, Providence hath opened a communication between the most distant parts of the globe: the largest solid bodies are wafted, with incredible swiftness, upon one fluid, by the impulse of another, and seas join the countries which they appear to divide. In the ocean we behold an emblem of the world: under a smooth deceitful surface it conceals dangerous rocks, and devouring monsters; its waves are ever restless, and oftentimes it is all over storm and tempest, threatening to overwhelm the helpless, despairing mariner at a moment; such is the voyage we all have to make ere we can reach the desired haven, and attain the happy clime, where, as we are told, there is 'no more sea.' Rev. xxi. 1.

27. *These wait all upon thee: that thou mayest*

*in their meat in due season. 28. That thou  
seest them, they gather : thou openest thine hand,  
filled with good.*

rious ways hath God provided food for the  
of all living creatures, and directed them  
and to find it. How pleasing a speculation  
consider the whole family of air, earth, and  
waiting upon' the Father and Lord of all  
expecting when he should 'open his hand,'  
tribute to each member his 'portion of meat  
season !' The case is the same with regard  
gs intellectual and spiritual, of which is  
ed the church and family of Christ in heaven  
rth ; these wait all upon him, by whom  
hath opened the hand of mercy, and  
ntly supplied all our needs, through the  
f his grace.

*Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled : thou  
away their breath, they die, and return to  
st. 30. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they  
sted : and thou renewest the face of the earth.*

n God, in the season of winter, seemeth to  
s face, and to have withdrawn his beneficent  
es, we hear the cries of the creation in dis-  
f he recal the breath of life from any crea-  
which he had communicated it, that crea-  
sently ceaseth to be what it was ; sense and  
are at an end ; the form and figure of it  
and it is resolved into its original dust.  
sin he exerteth his quickening power, and,  
h generations of animals are produced ;  
rops of vegetables shoot forth to nourish  
and there is a renovation of universal na-  
The presence of God, in like manner, is the

life, his absence is the death, of the soul. If he withdraw his grace, we perish everlastingly; but when he 'sendeth forth his Spirit,' as he did on the day of Pentecost, 'old things pass away, and all things become new;' the winter is over and spring succeeds in its place. Nay, the hour is coming, when, through the same Spirit, he shall also quicken our mortal bodies, and thus, in a more evident and wonderful manner 'renew the face of the earth.'

*31. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works. 32. He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.*

Such being the works of God, so manifold and so marvellous, the prophet foretelleth, 'that his 'glory,' displayed and declared by the same, should 'endure for ever;' that creatures would never be wanting, to give him the praise and honour due unto him; insomuch that, graciously accepting this their tribute, and pleased to find a proper return made him, Jehovah should, as at the first creation, acquiesce and rejoice in all his works and dispensations. In the meantime, let the unruly and disobedient reflect upon the greatness of his power, and the terrors of his vengeance, who with a look can shake the earth, and with a touch can fire the mountains, as when he once descended on Sinai.

*33. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises unto my God while I have my being. 34. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.*

And who, O divine Psalmist, will not 'sing' with thee, that hath an understanding to apprehend, and

tongue to celebrate, the works of his Maker Redeemer? To whom will not thy heavenly visitations be sweet as honey, fragrant as the breath of spring, pleasant and cheering as the fruit of the vine? Who doth not long to partake of thy eternal joy and holy gladness?

*5. Let the sinners, or, the sinner shall, be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked, or, the wicked shall, be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord.*

The sinners,' and 'the wicked,' are they of whom it is elsewhere said, that they 'consider not the works of Jehovah, nor regard the operations of his hands,' to give him praise and glory for them. We shall one day experience the power of that Word, whose wisdom and goodness they would never acknowledge. They shall be 'consumed,' and 'perish from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he riseth to shake terribly the earth.' The Psalmist, therefore, endeth as he began; 'Bless thou the Lord, O my soul;' adding, 'way of exhortation to us, and to all the world, praise ye the Lord.' Let us then, with the 'four and twenty elders, fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.' Rev. iv. 10, 11.

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*Twenty-first Day.—Morning Prayer.*

## PSALM CV.

**ARGUMENT.**—This Psalm, the first part of it at least verse 15, we know, from 1 Chron. xvi. to have been composed by David, and given out on occasion of his placing the ark in the tabernacle at Jerusalem, and of his placing the ark in the temple at Jerusalem. It containeth, 1—8. an exhortation to praise Jehovah for his works of mercy and power, wrought in favour of Israel. 9—44. These are traced from their source, namely the covenant made with Abraham, through the patriarchal history to the deliverance of the nation from the Egyptians, and settlement in Canaan; the end of all which, 45. is declared to be, that God might have a people to serve him. The subject of our redemption by Jesus Christ, which was the subject of the promise made to Abraham, and of whose temporal mercies, vouchsafed to the patriarchs and their posterity, were so many pledges and figures.

1. *O give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, and make known his deeds among the people.*

God, who formerly resided in Mount Zion, vouchsafing his presence in a tabernacle made with hands, hath since blessed the church with his appearing in the flesh; and we Christians are bound to 'make known his deeds,' and the mercies which he hath wrought for us, 'among the people;' that so all the world may know him, and love him, and praise him of his salvation.

2. *Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.*

Music and conversation are two things by which the mind of man receiveth much good, or a great deal of harm. They who make 'Jehovah' and 'wondrous works' the subjects of both, enjoy the favour of heaven upon earth. And they who do in re-

we their Saviour, will always find themselves inclined to 'sing to him,' and to 'talk of him.'

3. *Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.*

In whom should the redeemed 'glory,' exult, and triumph, but in their Redeemer, who hath made himself one with them, that they may be one with him? They who 'seek' the Lord Jesus by prayer, could do it with a cheerful and joyous heart, because better it is to 'seek' him, than to find all things else; and the soul that is brought to seek him will soon exchange the galling cares, and tormenting desires of the world, for the light yoke and easy burden of her Saviour, in whom she will find rest, and peace, and comfort. Therefore,

4. *Seek the Lord and his strength: seek his face evermore.*

By faith we find our Redeemer in this life, and experience the power and comfort of his grace; but hope and love still seek, and wish, and aspire after the sight and enjoyment of him in heaven, thither he is ascended.

5. *Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth: O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.*

As an encouragement to 'seek Jehovah evermore,' 'the seed of Abraham and the children of Jacob' are exhorted to bear in mind the marvellous works 'which he had done' for them, as also the judgments of his mouth,' whether by this phrase we understand the righteous laws given to



his people, or the denunciations and executions vengeance against their enemies. But, alas! 'the seed of Abraham' kept not the faith of their great progenitor; 'the children of Jacob' have forfeited the blessing which their father obtained. We Gentiles have been, for a long season, the adopted 'seed of Abraham,' and have inherited the benediction of 'Jacob.' Let us not forget the 'marvellous works' of God in Christ, and the 'judgments of his mouth.'

*7. He is the Lord our God, his judgments are all the earth.*

If Jehovah were the 'God' of Israel, on account of what, in covenant, he promised and performed for them, he is now the God of us all, on account of what he promised and hath performed in Christ Jesus for them and for us. If, when he settled Israel in Canaan, 'his judgments' were manifested to 'all the earth,' were they not manifested also when the Christian church was established, and the idolatrous powers of the world were overthrown by the gospel?

*8. He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generation. 9. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and heathen oath unto Isaac. 10. And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: 11. Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.*

Upon bringing the ark to mount Zion, David teacheth Israel to bless and praise God for his having 'remembered his covenant,' made with 'oath' to their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob, that he would, in due time, settle his people in the land of Canaan. Now, it is very observable, that in the hymn uttered by Zacharias, the father of St. John the Baptist, on the subject of our redemption by Christ, thanks are given to the Lord God of Israel, because he had 'remembered his holy covenant, and performed the oath which he sware to our forefather Abraham.' And what was that? Why, 'that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, should serve him, without fear, in holiness and righteousness.' But when, or where did God promise any such thing to Abraham, except when he told him, that 'his seed should be in bondage four hundred years,' but that 'the nation,' which detained them in bondage, should afterwards be 'judged,' and that they should be 'brought out,' and come to 'Canaan,' Gen. xv. 13, where they were to 'serve' him? The case seems to be this: Zacharias, under the immediate influence and direction of the Holy Spirit, transfers the language of the old dispensation to the affairs of the new one; he celebrates the redemption of the world, by Christ, from sin and death, in words which literally describe the redemption of Israel from Egypt by Moses; to teach us, that we should regard one as a sacramental pledge and figure of the other; that there is another bondage, in which the people of God are held; another Moses, who is to deliver them; another land of promise and of rest, where they are to be settled. This the Hebrews might have known, as St. Paul tells them, Heb. iv. from a passage in the ninety-fifth Psalm, where, long after they had been in possession of Canaan, David speaks of another 'day' of probation, and another 'rest.' The Jews have since had

a melancholy proof of the same thing, by be-  
dispossessed of that earthly inheritance which it  
falsely deemed to have been perpetual, and vain  
regarded as the end of all the promises, made to  
'thousand generations,' that is (a definite num-  
ber being put by an indefinite) to them, and to  
and to 'as many as the Lord our God shall call  
while the world shall last.

12. *When they were but a few men in number; y  
very few, and strangers in it.* 13. *When they w  
from one nation to another, from one kingdom  
another people.*

How wonderful was the display of God's w-  
dom and power, in his choosing a single fam-  
ily and that a small one, the members of which w-  
literally 'strangers and pilgrims upon earth;' his  
promising to that family, in those circumstances  
a large and fertile country, where the thrones  
of many princes were then firmly established; and  
lastly, in his putting them into actual possession  
of it, at the time appointed! Thus the family of  
the holy Jesus was at first but small; 'the mem-  
bers of it were a few, yea, a very few;' they were  
sojourners in a land not theirs; 'they went from a  
nation to another;' nay, they were accounted  
'refuse of the world, and the offscouring of  
things.' But, 'Fear not, little flock,' saith he unto  
them, 'for it is your Father's good pleasure to give  
you the kingdom.' Luke, xii. 32. Let us who  
Israel brought into Canaan, nor doubt but that  
believers shall inherit the kingdom of heaven, and  
succeed to the thrones of apostate angels.

14. *He suffered no man to do them wrong; y  
he reprov'd kings for their sakes; 15. Saying, Thou  
not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*

patriarchs, during their peregrinations, were in imminent danger; as Abraham on account of his wife; Gen. xx.; Isaac, in a similar case; Gen. xxvi.

Jacob from Laban; Gen. xxxi.; and from his brother Esau; Gen. xxxiii. Yet, destitute as they were of earthly help, the mightiest kings could not hurt them. Their 'ways pleased the Lord, and he made even their enemies to be at peace with them.' Prov. xvi. 7. They were the typical prophets, and Messiahs, or Christs, 'of Jehovah; and kings were forbidden to lift up a hand against them. How doth the same kind Providence watch over the body and the members of the Church; how often hath it interposed to protect and preserve them from the powers of the world!

*Moreover he called for a famine upon the land, he brake the whole staff of bread.*

When Jacob had escaped other perils, we find that his family likely to perish with hunger: Gen. xlii. 'Famine' is here finely represented as sent, ready to come and go, at the 'call' and command of God; for calamities, whether public or private, are the messengers of divine justice. The 'staff' is the 'staff' which supports life; when

Christi autem sive uncti dicuntur, quod essent et sacerdotes: summâ quippe potestate præditi, nullique obnoxii. Iura æquo jure pacta cum regibus: hinc bella suscepta, in nutu suo, auspiciis, ut aiunt, suis. Gen. xiv. 21. Hinc ad Abrahamum: 'Audi nos, Domine: Princeps Dei es mihi.' Ibid. xxiii. 6, nemini obnoxius, nisi Deo. Quo tempore et Jacobus usi sunt. Gen. xxvi. &c. Ad hæc provocant: ut hic, et Gen. xx. 7. Quos omnes titulos unum nomen complectitur. Christi autem dicuntur, in typo patris ab eis orituri.—Bossuet.

that staff is 'broken,' the body fails, and sinks to the earth. The word of God is the staff of spiritual life, the food and support of the soul; and the sorest of Heaven's judgments is that mentioned by the prophet Amos, ch. viii. 11: 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.' Such a famine was sore in all lands, when Christ made his appearance in the flesh; whose advent, with the blessed effects of it, is wonderfully shadowed forth in the prophetic history of the patriarch Joseph.

*17. He sent a man before them, even Joseph who was sold for a servant; 18. Whose feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in iron.*

Joseph and Jesus were both envied, hated, and sold by their brethren; both suffered by a false accusation; the former was laid in irons, the latter crucified, and confined in the prison of the grave, fast bound with the bands of death. The wickedness of man, in working its own will, did unwittingly accomplish the counsels of God. 'As for you,' saith Joseph to his brethren, Gen. 1. 20, 'ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.' And how doth St. Peter address the brethren of that other Joseph? 'Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.—And, now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it.—But those things which God before had showed by

ie mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should offer, he hath so fulfilled.' Acts, ii. 23, and iii. 17.

19. *Until the time that his word came : the word of the Lord tried him.*

Joseph continued in prison 'until the time that his word or cause, דבר, came' before the king, and was 'known,' according to our old translation; or, 'until his word,' or prediction concerning the chief butler's promotion, 'came to pass;' for this was the means of Joseph's enlargement and justification; since a person, guilty of the crime with which he stood charged, would not have been inspired to foretell future events. 'Can we find,' said Pharaoh, 'such an one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?' Gen. xli. 38. In the meantime, the 'word,' commandment, or decree, אמר, of the Lord tried him' in the furnace of affliction, here refining and preparing him for his approaching exaltation to glory and honour. Thus was here a time appointed for the abode of Jesus in the grave, at the expiration of which, all his promises and predictions were fulfilled: he came forth, 'made perfect through sufferings,' and ready to 'enter into his glory.'

20. *The king sent and loosed him ; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free.* 21. *He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance.* 22. *To bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his senators wisdom.*

The circumstances of Joseph's advancement, here alluded to, are related, Gen. xli. &c. Those of our Lord's resurrection and glorification afford a marvellous parallel. At the determined hour,

'The King' of heaven 'sent' his angel, 'and loosed him' from the bands of death; 'the Ruler of the world let him go free' from the penalty which he had undertaken to pay, and had now fully paid. 'He made him Lord of his house, the church, and Ruler of all his substance' in heaven and in earth, that he might, by his holy discipline, 'bind princes at his pleasure,' and by his gospel 'teach' true 'wisdom' to the 'senators' and politicians of the world; he was clothed with the robes of majesty, he was adorned with all the ensigns of royalty, and to him it was ordained that 'every knee should bow.' The storehouses of grace and salvation were opened; the nations came to be supplied by him with the bread of life; and we look for that happy day when the Jews shall do the same, and 'Joseph shall be made known to his brethren.'

*23. Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. 24. And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies. 25. He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.*

The Psalmist now exhibiteth to our view a fresh scene of tribulation and affliction, which occasioned repeated mercies, and a new deliverance. Israel, by means of Joseph, obtained an establishment in Egypt. But in process of time, the increase and prosperity of Israel excited the envy and jealousy of Egypt, and brought on a persecution. The kindness and love of God to his people 'turned the hearts' of the Egyptians against them, and caused animosity to take place of friendship. A king arose who knew not Joseph, and measures were concerted to keep the Hebrews under: a royal

edict was issued to prevent their increase, by putting the males to death; and the generation then in being was reduced to a state of the most abject servitude and cruel bondage. Such usage the people of God have often experienced from the world, at the instigation of him who in Scripture is styled 'the prince of this world.'

*26. He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen. 27. They showed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.*

When the tyranny and oppression of Pharaoh were at the highest, and Israel cried unto Jehovah because of the bondage, he remembered his promise to Abraham, and sent Moses, with Aaron, to effect that mighty deliverance which was to be the grand pledge and figure of our salvation by Jesus Christ. Of him Moses prophesied, when he said, 'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me.' Deut. xviii. 15, cited and applied Acts, iii. 22. He came to rescue mankind from a spiritual bondage, and to deliver all who were 'oppressed by the devil:' Acts, x. 38. He came at a time when that oppression was most grievous among Jews and Gentiles: his birth was signalized by an order from another Pharaoh to slay the infants; and Egypt afforded him a refuge from the tyrant's fury: he wrought innumerable 'signs and wonders;' but they were all signs of mercy, and wonders of love. Those of terror and vengeance were reserved for a future advent, foreshowed in the destruction of Jerusalem.

*28. He sent darkness, and made it dark: and they rebelled not against the word: or, and did they not*



*still rebel against his word? 29. He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish. 30. Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings. 31. He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, Heb. a mixture came, and lice in all their coasts. 32. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. 33. He smote their vines also, and fig-trees; and brake the trees of their coasts. 34. He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number. 35. And did eat up all the herbs in their land; and devoured the fruit of their ground. 36. He smote also the first-born in their land, the chief of all their strength.*

Who can behold this army of divine judgments thus passing in dreadful array before him, without trembling very exceedingly at that power which is able to send them, singly, or in conjunction, upon a sinful land? Who can reflect upon their number and variety, without adoring that goodness, patience, and long suffering, which tried so many different methods, and wanted so long, to lead the offenders to repentance? For more particulars see the comment on Psalm lxxviii. 43—51.

*37. He brought them, i. e. the people of Israel, forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes. 38. Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.*

The Israelites not only came forth from Egypt, but came forth laden with the spoils of their enemies, which they were commanded to take, by him who is the absolute Lord of all property, and who, as a righteous judge, did thus award to his people

the wages due to their incredible labours, the Egyptians being now willing and ready to furnish them with any thing required, in order to dismiss them. 'The Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste: for they said, We be all dead men.' Exod. xii. 33. And what was very extraordinary, among such a number of men, women, children, and cattle, nothing was weak and 'feeble,' nothing unable to perform the journey. The order was, that 'not a hoof should be left behind;' Exod. x. 26; and he who commanded gave strength to obey. Thou hast also enjoined us, thy servants, O Lord, to quit Egypt, and march for Canaan! let thy grace invigorate us, from time to time, that so we faint not by the way.

*39. He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night. 40. The people asked, and he brought quails; and satisfied them with the bread of heaven. 41. He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out: they ran in the dry places like a river.*

'Brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ.' 1 Cor. x. 1—4. In our passage through this wilderness of life, over barren sands, and amidst fiery serpents, be thou, blessed Lord, our guide and our guard; protected by thy providence, supported by thy word, and refreshed by thy Spirit, lead us even where, and in what

manner it shall seem good to thee ; only do not thou forsake us, and we ask no more.

*42. For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant. 43. And he brought forth his people with joy and his chosen with gladness.*

The same God hath since ‘ remembered again his promise to Abraham ;’ he hath visited his people, and redeemed them from the bondage of sin, under the tyranny of Satan ; which redemption they daily celebrate in the church, with ‘ joy and gladness,’ waiting for their final deliverance from death and the grave, when they are to sing in heaven ‘ the song of Moses and of the Lamb.’ Rev. xv. 3.

*44. And gave them the lands of the heathen : and they inherited the labour of the people ; 45. That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the Lord.*

It was not, therefore, intended that the Israelites should regard Canaan as their paradise, and look no further ; but that, being rescued from their enemies, and settled in peace and plenty, they should improve the opportunity thereby afforded them, of serving the Lord their God, and of securing to themselves, through the obedience of faith, an inheritance in ‘ a better country, that is to say, an heavenly.’ And let all the children of faithful Abraham, whose lot hath fallen in ‘ a land flowing with milk and honey’ upon earth, reflect, that God hath given them riches, and the leisure which riches procure, not for the purpose of indulging and corrupting themselves and others, but that they may glorify him, benefit their neighbours, and save their own souls ; ‘ that they may observe

atutes, and keep his laws.' Israel was delivered by Moses, and the church redeemed by Christ, and might 'purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Tit. ii. 14.

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*Twenty-first Day.—Evening Prayer.*

### PSALM CVI.

**COMMENT.**—The Psalmist here again commemorates the many benefits, upbraiding withal the ingratitude of those who enjoyed them. 1, 2. He exhorteth men to the praise of Jehovah; 3—5. proclaimeth the blessedness, and longeth for the glory of the saints; 6. confesseth the sins of Israel, and sets forth a detail of their rebellions; 7—12. at the Red Sea; 13—15. when they lusted for flesh in the wilderness; 16—18. the matter of Korah; 19—23. in that of the golden calf; 24—27. at the report of the spies; 28—31. in the affair of Balaam; 32, 33. at the waters of Meribah; 34—39. in destroying idolatry, but being seduced by it. 40—46. sets forth God's frequent judgments, and as frequent mercies, are recalled; 47. a prayer is made, that Jehovah would gather Israel together among the heathen, which shows the Psalm to have been written during some captivity or dispersion. The last verse contains an act of blessing and praise.

*O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, his mercy endureth for ever.*

the person of a penitent nation, the prophet exhorts mankind to 'give thanks unto Jehovah,' that 'goodness' which preventeth us with blessings; and for that 'mercy' which forgiveth our transgressions; that mercy which was shown to our fathers upon their repentance, and will 'ever' be shown, upon the same condition, to us and our children; that mercy which will bring sin and

misery to an end, itself continuing eternal and unchangeable.

*2. Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can show forth all his praise?*

But who is sufficient for a work that demandeth the tongues and harps of angels? 'When you glorify the Lord,' saith the son of Sirach, 'exalt him as much as you can; for even yet will he far exceed; and when you exalt him, put forth all your strength, and be not weary, for you can never go far enough.' Ecclus. xliii. 30.

*3. Blessed are they that keep judgment; and he that doeth righteousness at all times.*

Next to angels, they are blessed and qualified to praise God with the voice, who glorify him in their lives; who having experienced in themselves the 'mighty acts' of mercy, pardoning the guilt, and breaking the power of sin, are become the servants of Jesus, and render to their Saviour 'at all times,' in adversity no less than in prosperity, the due tribute of unfeigned love and obedience.

*4. Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation. 5. That I may see the good of thy chosen: that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation; that I may glory with thine inheritance.*

The Psalmist offereth a prayer for himself, or rather for the church of Israel, that she, with himself, might partake of such blessedness. The words might have a reference to a temporal restoration and felicity; but they certainly extend much fur-

er, and form the most spiritual and heavenly titution that the devoutest Christian can prefer to the throne of grace. 'Remember me, O Lord, with the favour' which thou hast always shown to thy people,' in whom thou hast delighted from the foundation of the world, and on whom it is thy good pleasure to confer a glorious kingdom. 'Visit me with thy salvation,' with which so many patriarchs, prophets, and kings have desired to be visited, the salvation of thy Christ, the justifier of all them that believe, and the rewarder of his saints: 'that I may see the good of thy countenance,' their felicity in beholding thy countenance, and living for ever in thy presence; 'that may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation,' the unspeakable gladness of those who enter into the glory of their Lord; 'and glory with thine inheritance,' singing hallelujahs before thine everlasting throne, in the Jerusalem which is above. The Jewish church, when in peace and tranquillity serving her God, and chanting the songs of Sion, afforded a very lively representation of this eternal felicity.

6. *We have sinned with our fathers: we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedly.*

They who have joined with the prophet in his affectionate aspiration after the divine favour, may here learn the surest way to attain it; namely, by confessing their own sins, and those of their ancestors. 'We have sinned with our fathers,' that is, after their example of unbelief and disobedience, of which an account immediately followeth. The fathers' sins are often reflected in their children; and each new reflection, instead of being weaker,

is stronger than the foregoing; as in the case of the Jews.

*7. Our fathers understood not thy wonders, O Egypt: they remembered not the multitude of mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea.*

The Israelites did not profit, as they should have done, by the miracles wrought for them in Egypt; they increased not in the wisdom and knowledge of God their Saviour; but when they saw themselves pursued by Pharaoh, their faith failed, they murmured against Moses, and wished themselves away from the bondage from which they were just delivered. Exod. xiv. 10, &c. Thus, when the penitent findeth himself beset with difficulties and dangers, when he seeth before him that death unto which he must pass to a life of righteousness, while the devil and the world follow him after him, to destroy or bring him back to a cruel bondage, how apt is he to forget all that Christ hath done for him! Fear puts out the light of faith, and hides the prospect of the promised land; imagination recalls the former gratifications of sense; he is tempted to regret the desertion of Egypt, and to wish for a return to it again.

*8. Nevertheless, he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known. 9. He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. 10. And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. 11. And he covered their enemies: there was not one of them*

*left. 12. Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.*

Comforted and encouraged by Moses, the armies of Israel advanced to the shore; and, lo, the waves, at the lifting up of the powerful rod, instantly parted, and, like so many well-disciplined troops, arranging themselves in two columns, disclosed a new and strange path, by which the people of God were conducted, in perfect security, to the opposite shore; when the waters, falling down, and reassuming their ancient habitation, overwhelmed the infidel host, and left not a man to carry the news to Egypt. Through all the difficulties and dangers of the Christian course, faith will ever find a way opened, by the power of Jesus, from sin to righteousness, and from death to life: the enemies of our salvation, how formidable soever, shall disappear, and be no more; and we shall sing, like Israel, a song of triumph to the Lord our God.

*13. They soon forgot his works, Heb. They made haste, they forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel. 14. But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. 15. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their souls.*

Soon after the Israelites had experienced the power and goodness of Jehovah, at the Red Sea, we find them murmuring against him, Exod. xv. 24. They grew impatient, they looked upon themselves as forgotten, and given over to destruction. They loathed manna, and required flesh: flesh was sent them, on which they surfeited themselves; the wrath



of God smote them, and many were carried off a grievous plague : Numb. xi. 4, 33. Let us le to wait God's time and counsel, for the supply necessities, much more of conveniences ; remembering that he hath given us his Son, and therefore will not deny us such inferior corporeal blessings as he foreseeth will really prove blessings to Let us be duly thankful for that ' bread which cometh down from heaven,' cautious how we request the good things of this world, and strictly temper in the use of them when given.

*16. They envied Moses also in the camp, and slew the saint of the Lord. 17. The earth opened, and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram. 18. And a fire was kindled in their company ; the flame burnt up the wicked.*

Moses and Aaron were the divinely appointed governors of Israel, in church and state. Envy and ambition led Korah, Dathan, and Abiram to attack the former of tyranny, and the latter of priestcraft. Jehovah was appealed to, a day appointed, and a decision made. One body of the malcontents was cast down alive into the pit, another was consumed by fire from heaven : Numb. xvi. Let schismatics and rebels beware of that ' pit' which is bottomless, and of that ' fire' which shall never be quenched.

*19. They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. 20. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. They forgot God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt : 22. Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea.*

While the terrible presence of God abode upon

Sinai, and Moses was gone up thither to receive law, even then, and there, 'at Horeb,' the apostatized to the old favourite sin of idolatry and persuaded Aaron to make them a 'calf,' before which they prostrated themselves, ledging it, or the power represented by it, or that was, to have been the author of their deliverance from Egypt; Exod. xxxii. : 'for as to them they knew not what was become of him,' nor expected to see him any more. Thus they degraded their 'glory,' the glory which had accompanied them in the mystic cloud, nay, which was then present before their eyes on the top of the mount, 'for an image made like to a four-footed beast,' as it is said of the heathen in their worst days, Rom. i. 23; and thus they forgot Jehovah, who had wrought his works and wonders for them at Sinai and at the Red Sea. It is to be hoped, that we shall never live to see a time when the miracles of redemption shall be forgotten; when the remembrance of Jesus Christ from heaven shall be despaired of; when the people shall solicit their teachers to create a new philosophical deity for them to worship, instead of the God of their ancestors, to whose glory hath been ascribed from generation to generation.

*Therefore he said that he would destroy them, but at Moses his chosen stood before him in the midst, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.*

When we hear Jehovah saying to Moses, on account of his people's monstrous ingratitude and their wickedness, 'Let me alone, that my wrath may be kindled against them, and that I may consume them.'

them, and I will make of thee a great nation when we hear Moses, notwithstanding this, ceding for his countrymen, with the offendency of heaven; urging to God the glory of name, the relation in which he stood to Israel, covenant he had made with their fathers; they must be cast off, desiring himself to be with them; 'If thou wilt, forgive their sin; and not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book thou hast written;' how we are astonished at an instance of such invincible fortitude, fervent unadulterated patriotism, triumphant faith, as bounded charity! Once, and but once, was an instance exceeded, by Him in whose name the intercession of Moses was made and accepted, really taking upon himself the sins of his people, suffered the vengeance due to them; and now at the right hand of God interceding for them. See Exod. xxxii. 10—14, and 32.

*24. Yea, they despised the pleasant land, believed not his word; 25. But murmured in the tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord. 26. Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness: 27. To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.*

The history here alluded to is contained in Numbers xiii. and xiv. The spies brought back a favorable account of the promised land and its produce, but communicated to the people those terrible apprehensions, with which themselves were possessed concerning the power of the Anakims, and the inhabitants of Canaan. Infidelity presently covered itself by its usual fruit, disobedience.

might they should never be able to surmount all these difficulties, but should become a prey, with their wives and children, to the sword; and a return to Egypt was once more the cry of the camp of Israel. Therefore did Jehovah 'lift up his hand against them;' he declared that none of the generation then in being, Joshua and Caleb only excepted, should enter into his rest, but that they would fall in the wilderness, without setting foot on that pleasant and most desirable land. Discomfiture and dispersion were also threatened to their posterity, that is, if they should go on in the same spirit of rebellion, and fill up the measure of their fathers' iniquities; which they have since done, and are accordingly 'overthrown among the nations, and scattered among the lands' to this day. But do not thou suffer us, O Lord, to despise that 'pleasant land,' which thou designest to be the inheritance of thy saints: whatever obstructions may be thrown in our way, suffer us not, through sloth and cowardice, to 'disbelieve thy word,' to doubt the accomplishment of thy promises, or to 'murmur' against thy dispensations.

28. *They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.* 29. *Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions; and the plague brake in upon them.* 30. *Then stood up Pharaoh, and executed judgment; and so the plague was stayed.* 31. *And that was counted unto him for righteousness, unto all generations for evermore.*

By Balaam's advice, Numb. xxxi. 16, the Moabites and Midianites sent their daughters among the people of Israel, who soon yielded to the temptation, and fornication ended in idolatry; nay, per-

haps it might be a part of the Moabitish ritual ; & we know it was among the religious services paid by the latter heathens to some of their deities. But the 'sacrifices of the dead,' may be meant sacrifice which were offered either to dead idols, or to men deified after death. To punish this apostasy, the wrath of Jehovah went forth, and twenty-four thousand perished by the plague, which at length ceased when Phinehas had 'executed judgment' upon Zimri and Cosbi, who seemed, indeed, to call aloud for it, by indulging their lawless passions in the midst of so grievous a calamity, at a time when the whole congregation were humbling themselves before God at the door of the tabernacle. 'Wherefore,' saith God, 'behold I give unto him my covenant of peace; and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel. Numb. xxv. 12. It is most probable, as Dr. Hammond observes, that Phinehas, being the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, was one of the judges of Israel; and if so, he had a clear commission for what he did, from Moses, who had 'said to the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his man, that were joined to Baalpeor.' Numb. xxv. 5. The case of Phinehas, therefore, is no precedent for uncommissioned zealots. In general we learn from this part of the sacred history, how acceptable to God is a well-timed zeal for his service; as also how dangerous it is to converse too freely with those of the other sex, especially when they have been educated in a false religion, or in no religion at all.

32. *They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sake:*

*because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake  
ragedly with his lips.*

s instance of disobedience was, in point of  
prior to that mentioned in the preceding  
. It is related, Numb. xx. 2—13. The  
of Moses, though he was the meekest man  
earth, was so exasperated and embittered by  
ual murmurings and rebellions, that he is  
ed with ‘not having believed God, to sanc-  
m in the eyes of the children of Israel;’ and  
on that account, denied the honour of bring-  
em into the land of promise. He had been  
anded to smite the rock, that water might  
forth. In anger he smote it twice, thus up-  
ng the people: ‘Hear now, ye rebels; must  
ch you water out of this rock?’ He showed  
at affiance in God, that disposition to glorify  
efore his people, which became him in the  
ion of his office. ‘The wrath of man’ found  
sion, and that ‘worketh not the righteousness  
l.’ Thou, blessed Jesus, art the only perfect  
a of patience and love; O grant to all, but  
all, to the pastors of thy flock, a ‘spirit’ not  
o be ‘provoked,’ and lips not hasty to ‘speak  
ragedly.’

*They did not destroy the nations, concerning  
the Lord commanded them: 35. But were  
d among the heathen, and learned their works.  
d they served their idols; which were a snare  
tem.*

en the iniquity of the Canaanites was full, it  
l God to extirpate the race, and Israel was  
ssioned to execute upon them the vengeance

determined. But the conquerors suffered themselves frequently to be seduced into all the abominations of the conquered, and spared their idolatrous altars, till themselves came to bow down before them. Judg. ii. 2, 3. The Canaanites, against whom we Christians militate, are our lusts, which, if they are spared and treated with, will prove 'a snare' to us, and in time become our masters. Mercy shown to them is cruelty to ourselves, and will always be found so in the end.

*37. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils: 38. And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.*

It is plain that the 'devils,' mentioned in the former of these two verses, are 'the idols of Canaan,' mentioned in the latter. The word translated 'devils,' is שרים, literally, 'the pourers forth;' by which it is highly probable, that the idolaters meant the great agents of nature, or the heavens, considered as giving rain, causing the earth to send out springs, and to put forth her increase; vegetables to yield and nourish their fruit, and animals to abound with milk, for the subsistence of their young.<sup>1</sup> Idolatry being a work of the devil, it is true, in fact, that what is offered to an idol, is offered to the devil; though the word ערש doth by no means imply it. We stand astonished, doubtless, at this horrid, barbarous, and unnatural impiety of offering children by fire to a Moloch: but how little is it considered, that children brought

<sup>1</sup> See the account given of the word by the learned and ingenious Mr. Parkhurst, in his excellent Hebrew-English Lexicon.

p in the ways of ignorance, error, vanity, folly, and vice, are more effectually sacrificed to the great adversary of mankind.

*39. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. 40. therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people; insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. 41. And he gave them into the hand of the heathen, and they that hated them ruled over them. 42. Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand. 43. Many times did he deliver them, but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. 44. Nevertheless, he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry. 45. And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies. 46. He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.*

This is an epitome of the history of the Israelites, from the time when they took possession of Canaan, downwards. Transgressions brought on chastisements; chastisements produced repentance; and repentance obtained mercy. For their last and grand rebellion against the Son of God, and their King Messiah, whom they murdered, the sore burden of heaven's displeasure hath now rested upon the nation these seventeen hundred years; but their eyes are not yet opened; their hearts have not, hitherto, relented. How hath the 'wrath of Jehovah been kindled against his people, insomuch that he hath abhorred his own inheritance!' How hath he 'given them into the hand of the heathen, and caused them that hated them to rule over



them !' How have ' their enemies oppressed them ;' how have they been brought into subjection under their ' hand ! Nevertheless, O Lord, regard their affliction, when thou hearest their cry ;' grant them repentance first, and then pardon ; ' remember for them thy covenant ;' let them change their mind, and do thou ' change thy purpose, according to the multitude of thy mercies ; make them also to be pitied of all those that have carried them captives ;' cause them, upon their conversion, to find favour in the eyes of the nations ; and do thou, who hast so long been ' a light to lighten the Gentiles,' become once more ' the glory of thy people Israel.'

47. *Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise.*

It appears from this verse, that the Psalm was written at a time when Israel was in captivity ' among the heathen.' Such will be the petition of the Jews hereafter to him whom they crucified ; and such is now the petition of the Christian church, that the elect may be finally gathered together, and united in one congregation, ' to give thanks unto the name, and triumph for ever in the praises of Jesus.'

48. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting ; and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord.*

At all times, in all places, and by all persons, on earth and in heaven, in prosperity and adversity, peace or persecution, ' The Lord God of Israel,' the Saviour and Redeemer of his church,

is to be 'blessed;' nor can any situation exempt a believer from saying, 'Amen, Hallelujah,' that is, from blessing God himself, and exciting others to do the same.

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*Twenty-second Day.—Morning Prayer.*

PSALM CVII.

**ARGUMENT.**—The redeemed of the Lord are exhorted in this Psalm, 1—3. to praise him for his goodness in redeeming, and gathering them from the four quarters of the world. Their danger and their deliverance are represented under the four striking images, 4—9. of travellers lost in a wilderness, but directed and conducted home; 10—16. of prisoners rescued from captivity; 17—22. of sick and dying men restored to health; 23—32. of mariners preserved in a storm at sea, and brought safe into port. 33—41. Some other instances of God's providence in the government of the world, and of the church, are adduced and insisted on, for, 42. the consolation of the righteous, and 43. the instruction of all.

1. *O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.* 2. *Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.* 3. *And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north and from the south.*

Eternal mercy is the theme here proposed; and they who have tasted its sweets are invited to join in setting forth its praises. The members of the Christian church are now, in the most proper and emphatical sense of the words, 'the redeemed of Jehovah, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gathered them,' by the

gospel, out of all lands, and from all the corners of the world, to form a church, and to the place of the apostate Jews; whose forefathers experienced, in type and shadow, the good prepared for them and for us, in truth and substance. 'Many,' saith our Lord to the 'shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall stand down in the kingdom of God; and ye yourselves shall be thrust out.' Matt. viii. 11; Luke, x. 10. We, converted Gentiles, are the happy people, and we are taught in this Psalm to celebrate the mercy which made us so.

*4. They wandered in the wilderness, in a lonely way, they found no city to dwell in. 5. Hungry, thirsty, their soul fainted in them. 6. They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. 7. And he brought them forth by the right way, that they might enter into a city of habitation.*

The spiritual blessings of redemption are represented by the Psalmist under four excellent and expressive images; which are themselves four especial acts of God's merciful care and love, shown toward the believers in the world; corresponding with as many works of grace wrought on the souls of believers in the church. The first of these pictures exhibits to our view a set of travellers lost in a far desert, and well nigh famished through want of necessary provisions. They make their distress known by prayer to Jehovah, and lo, he appears as their guard and their guide; he supplies their necessities upon the journey, and con-

them in safety to their place of abode. Thus he dwelt with Israel of old, in their passage, through the waste and howling wilderness, from Egypt to Canaan. And thus he is ready to deal with us all. "The world," saith Lord Bolingbroke,<sup>1</sup> "is a great wilderness, wherein mankind have wandered about from the creation.—We are not only passengers, or sojourners, but absolute strangers at the first steps we make in it." We are so, indeed; and too often, through our own fault, continue such to the last; we find not the way which leads to heaven, nor, if we did find it, have we strength to travel in it, without the viaticum which cometh from thence, and which alone can bring us thither. Fervent and importunate prayer to the God of our salvation will procure, from above, knowledge to dispel our ignorance, and grace to help our infirmities; the former will discover to us our road, the latter will enable us to walk in it, and both together will carry us, in due time, to 'the city of our eternal habitation.'

8. *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* 9. *For he satisfieth the longing, or, thirsty, soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.*

The former of these two verses is a chorus, repeated after the celebration of each of the four mercies here related. Literally it is, 'Let them acknowledge to Jehovah his mercy, and his wonders for the children of Adam.' And what can better deserve our acknowledgment, than the provision made for the bodies and souls of Christian travellers, in their way to that heavenly country and city,

<sup>1</sup> Reflections on History, vol i. p. 244, and 171.

' where they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' Rev. vii. 1

10. *Such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron:* 11. *Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High:* 12. *Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help.* 13. *They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.* 14. *He brought them out of darkness, and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.* 15. *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* 16. *For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.*

In this second piece of divine scenery, we behold a people groaning under all the miseries of captivity, deprived of light and liberty, chained down in horrid dungeons, and there expecting the day of execution. These calamities they are represented as having brought upon themselves by their rebellion against God, who takes this method of humbling them. It succeeds, and brings them upon their knees to Him who alone is able to deliver them. Moved by their cries, he exerts his power on their behalf, and frees them from the house of bondage. To a state of corporal servitude the Israelites, for their transgressions, were frequently reduced, and many times experienced,

their repentance, the goodness of Jehovah in saving them from it. But the grand and universal truth is that of sin and death; the grand and universal deliverance, for which all the redeemed Lord ought to praise his mercy, is that by Christ. Adam and all his posterity 'rebelled at the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High.' By so doing, they subjected themselves to a slavery the heaviest and bitterest of all. The devil led them captive at his will, and set over them their own insatiable lusts and passions, as so many taskmasters, to afflict, and oppress them under. By these the soul is confined so in prison, and bound with so many chains, that it cannot get forth to do the will of God, even when it is made known to it. Of mankind in this state of slavery may it be said, and how often in Scripture is it said, under these and the like figures, 'they sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, fast bound in misery, and bands stronger than brass.'—He also brought down their heart through heaviness, they fell down, and there was none to help them. A sense of this his woful condition forces the sinner to 'cry unto the Lord Jesus in his trouble, and to say, 'O wretched man that I am, who deliver me from this body of death!' 'Bring me out of prison, that I may give thanks unto thy name.' And now his prayer is heard, the grace of Christ cometh to his assistance, and he is made free indeed.' His chains, like those of St. Peter, are loosed at the word of his deliverer; he is 'saved from his distress;' he is brought 'out of darkness and the shadow of death,' into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The joy consequent upon such a deliverance will be exceeded

only by that which shall take place in the t  
and be expressed by the voices of the redeem  
the day when Christ shall accomplish the rec  
tion of their bodies also, as he hath already ef  
that of his own, from the power of the grave;  
he shall dash in pieces the brazen gates and  
mantine bars of that prison-house, put an e  
ever to the bondage of corruption, and lead  
vity captive in the highest heavens.

*17. Fools, because of their transgressions, as  
cause of their iniquities, are afflicted. 18. They  
abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw  
unto the gates of death. 19. Then they cry un  
Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of  
distresses. 20. He sent his word and healed  
and delivered them from their destruction.  
that men would praise the Lord for his goodnes  
for his wonderful works to the children of men  
And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanks;  
and declare his works with rejoicing.*

The recovery of men from sickness affords t  
image of the benefits conferred on our natu  
the Redeemer. Sickness, as we are here info  
is the punishment of human folly and ini  
When it is extreme, it deprives man of all  
and appetite for his food; nay, it makes him  
and detest the very sight and smell of that  
should nourish and support him; in which c  
must waste away, and soon 'draw near to the  
of death.' But from those dreadful gates the  
of God can snatch us when we are just ab  
enter them. To an infirm and emaciated bo  
can restore health, strength, and beauty; fr  
eases are his ministers and messengers; the

his command, and at his command they recover and we recover again. The Israelites in the wilderness, 'because of their transgressions, and use of their iniquities, were often afflicted' with plague. But when they repented, and atonement made, the plague ceased. They were stung by serpents; but when they 'cried unto Jehovah, and obeyed his word, and healed them.' 'They were healed,' as the author of the book of Wisdom observes, 'for a small season, that they might be admonished, having a sign of salvation to put them in remembrance of the commandment of thy law. He that turned himself towards it, was not healed by the thing that he saw, but by thee art the Saviour of all.' Wisdom, xvi. 6, 7. Sentence of death was passed upon Hezekiah; he already saw himself at 'the gates of the grave,' expected no more to 'behold man with the countenances of the world.' Yet his prayer prevailed for respite, and fifteen years were added to his life. Isa. xxxviii. Now the mind, by reason of sin, is not less subject to infirmities than the body. These infirmities reduce a man to a state of sloth and listlessness; he finds himself incapable of action, indisposed for the reception of divine truths, without taste for knowledge, or inclination to virtue; he even nauseates the book of God, and the bread of heaven; and the life of faith is in jeopardy. But the case is not desperate, while there is breath enough left to call in, by prayer, the great Physician of spirits. The most inveterate disease gives place to his efficacious medicines; life revives, health returns, and the believer is restored in the vigour and beauty of holiness. All who have been thus 'healed, and saved



from destruction,' either of body or soul, 'acknowledge to Jehovah his mercy, and his wounds wrought for the children of Adam: let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.'

23. *They that go down to the sea in ships, that business in great waters.* 24. *These see the works the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.* 25. *For commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifeth up the waves thereof.* 26. *They mount to heaven, they go down again to the depths, the soul is melted because of trouble.* 27. *They reel and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end; Heb. all their wisdom or skill, swallowed up.* 28. *Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of the distresses.* 29. *He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.* 30. *Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto the desired haven.* 31. *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!* 32. *Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.*

The fourth similitude chosen to portray the dangers of our present state, and the goodness of God displayed in our salvation, is taken from that significant instance of the divine power and providence, the preservation of mariners in a storm at sea. The description which the Psalmist hath given us of such an event admitteth of no comment. Experience alone can illustrate its beauty, evince its truth, and point out the propriety of the circumstances which are selected to furnish us with a full and complete

ea of the whole. Few of us, indeed, are ever  
 kely to be in that terrible situation. But then we  
 nnot help reflecting, that there is a ship in which  
 e are all embarked; there is a troubled sea on  
 hich we all sail; there are are storms by which  
 e are all frequently overtaken; and there is a  
 aven which we all desire to behold and to enter.  
 or the church is a ship; the world is a sea;  
 mptations, persecutions, and afflictions are the  
 aves of it; the prince of the power of the air is  
 e stormy wind which raises them; and heaven is  
 e only port of rest and security. Often during  
 e voyage, for our punishment or our trial, God per-  
 mitteth us to be thus assaulted. The succession and  
 e violence of our trouble, the elevations and  
 epressions of mind and fortune, the uncertainty  
 f our counsels, and our utter inability to help  
 ourselves, are finely represented by the multitude  
 nd impetuosity of the waves, the tossings and agi-  
 tions of the vessel, the confusion, terror, and  
 istress among the sailors. In both cases prayer is  
 e proper effect, and the only remedy left. With  
 e earnestness of affrighted mariners, who will  
 en be devout, though they never were so before,  
 e should 'cry unto the Lord Jesus in our trouble;'   
 e should, as it were, 'awake' him, like the dis-  
 ples, with repetitions of 'Lord save us, we perish!'   
 hen will he arise, and rebuke the authors of our  
 ibulation, saying unto them, 'Peace, be still;'   
 nd they shall hear and obey his voice. 'He will  
 ake the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof  
 all be still;' and at length he will 'bring us'  
 peace, joy, and gladness, to 'our desired haven,'   
 ere to 'exalt him in the congregation' of his  
 osen, and 'praise him in the' great 'assembly'

of saints and angels. This is the consummation so devoutly wished and requested by the church for all her children, at the time of their baptism, that they, 'being delivered from God's wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's church; and, being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally they may come to the land of everlasting life.' Thus we see there is no spiritual evil, out of which God is not both able and willing to deliver us, when we call upon him. Are we ignorant of the way to the heavenly city? He will guide and conduct us thither. Are we bound with the chains of sin and death? He will loose and deliver us. Are our minds diseased and languid? He will heal and invigorate them. Are we in danger of being overwhelmed by the troubles of the world? He will preserve us in the midst of them, until he bid them cease. Of his power and inclination to do these things for our souls, he hath given assurance to all men, by those pledges of his love, the benefits and blessings conferred on the bodies of his people, in leading them through the wilderness to Canaan; in rescuing them so often from the miseries of captivity; in healing their diseases; and in saving those of them who 'did business in great waters,' from the perils of the sea. Certainly the mind of man cannot have a nobler subject for meditation in this world, than the wonders of providence, considered as representing the mercies of redemption.

33. *He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water springs into dry ground.* 34. *A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* 35. *He turneth the wilderness into*

*landed water, and dry ground into water  
rivers; 36. And there he maketh the hungry to  
eat, that they may prepare a city for habitation;  
And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which  
yield fruits of increase. 38. He blessed them  
so that they are multiplied greatly, and suf-  
fer not their cattle to decrease.*

In this latter part of the Psalm, the prophet fur-  
ther exemplifieth the power, the justice, and the  
goodness of God; his power, in being able to change  
the very nature of things; his justice and his good-  
ness, in so doing, either to punish the rebellious,  
or reward the obedient. A well watered and  
fertile country shall, for the sins of its inhabitants,  
be converted into a dry and barren one. The  
land of Jordan, which, before the overthrow of  
Sodom and Gomorrah, was well watered every-  
where, 'like the garden of Jehovah,' Gen. xiii. 10,  
has, since that overthrow, been a land of salt and  
sulphur, and perpetual sterility. Nay even the  
once fruitful Palestine itself, that flowed with milk  
and honey, is at this day a region of such utter  
desolation, that the very possibility of its ever hav-  
ing sufficed to maintain the people who formerly  
inhabited it, is now called in question. And, in-  
deed, while the rain of heaven shall continue to be  
in the hand of God, how easy is it for him, by  
withholding it during a few months, to blast all the  
most promising hopes of man; and, instead of  
prosperity, joy, and health, to visit him with famine,  
silence, and death! On the other hand, when  
the ways of a people please him, he can rid them  
of these dreadful guests; the rain shall descend  
from above, the springs shall rise from beneath, the

PSALM. III. 1.

earth shall yield her increase, the cattle shall feed in large pastures, the seasons shall be kindly, the air salutary, and the smiling face of nature shall attest the loving kindness of the Lord. Thus, the dispensations of grace, hath he dealt with Jews and Gentiles. The synagogue of the former, so rich in faith, watered with the benedictions of heaven, fruitful in prophets and saints, adorned with the services of religion, and the presence of Jehovah, hath been, since the murder of the Son of God, cursed with infidelity, parched like the withered tops of the mountains of Gilboah, barren and desolate as the land of their ancient residence, whose naked rocks seem to declare to all the world the hard-heartedness and unprofitableness of its owners. When the 'fruitful field' thus became a 'forest,' the 'wilderness,' at the same time, it became a 'fruitful field.' A church was planted in the Gentile world, and the 'Spirit was poured out upon it from on high.' In that 'wilderness do waters break out, and streams in that desert.' There was faith sown, and holiness was the universal product. 'The wilderness and the solitary place were glad, and the desert rejoiced, and blossomed like the rose. It blossomed abundantly, and rejoiced even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon was given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon;' the privileges and honours of the synagogue were conferred upon the church; and the nations now 'saw the glory of Jehovah, and the excellency of God:' Isa. xxxii. 15; xxxv. 1, 2. Spiritual increase, health, and plenty, spiritual peace, joy, and happiness, appeared in beautiful and lovely procession, and the blessing of Jesus was upon this his new inheritance in every way.

39. *Again they are minished and brought low, through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.* 40. *He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.* 41. *Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.*

But let not those who have received the largest share of heaven's favours therefore boast and presume. The continuance of those favours dependeth upon the continuance of their fidelity and obedience. Mighty empires, with their 'princes,' have, for their wickedness, been 'brought low' by the arm of Jehovah, and laid in the dust, while nations 'poor' and feeble, and never thought of, have 'been taken from thence, and exalted over them.' What revolutions have, in like manner, happened, and probably are still to happen, in the church! Jerusalem is fallen, through unbelief; and the Gentile church standeth only by faith, from which if she depart, vengeance will be executed on her likewise. Yet, even in the worst of times, there is a promise, that 'the poor' in spirit, the faithful and humble disciples of the holy Jesus, shall be preserved from the evil, and 'set on high from affliction;' yea, that they shall be multiplied 'like a flock,' under the care of the good Shepherd, to preserve his name, and to continue a church upon the earth, until he shall return again.

42. *The righteous shall see it, and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.*

Two consequences will follow from this alternate display of the mercy and the judgment of God. The righteous, finding themselves still the objects

roaring against him, like the roaring of lions, w  
they cried out, 'He is a Samaritan and ha  
devil, and is mad; away with him, away  
him; crucify him, crucify him.' Sometimes, 'ceitful and lying tongues' were employed, ei  
to entangle and entrap him in his talk, or to  
false witness against him. And all this was d  
not only 'without a cause,' but men were his b  
and implacable 'adversaries,' in return for  
'love' which brought him from heaven, to  
them with an everlasting salvation. Let the affli  
and traduced disciple rejoice, in that he is  
formed to the image of his Master. And from  
example of that Master let him learn what co  
to take, when in such circumstances—'But I  
myself unto prayer.'

6. *'Thou wilt set a wicked man, or, the wi  
one, over him, and Satan shall stand at his  
hand.* 7. *When he is judged, he shall be condem  
and his prayer shall become sin.*

A transition is here made to the adversarie  
Messiah; primarily to Judas, 'who was guid  
them that took Jesus,' Acts, i. 16; secondarily  
the synagogue, of whom Judas may be consid  
as an epitome and representative. It is foret  
that by betraying and murdering the best of r  
ters, they should subject themselves to the tyra  
of the worst; that they should become slave

<sup>1</sup> As most of the following verbs are in the future tense, the rest have evidently a predictive and future import, the liberty is here taken, as in Ps. lxix. of rendering them thro out uniformly in that tense: by which means the curses nounced in this Psalm will at once appear to be of the same port with those in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomi The reader is entreated, when he shall have perused the Ps to turn to that chapter and judge for himself.

the 'wicked one,' who should justly be 'set over them,' when they had delivered themselves into his hands: that 'Satan,' who had stood by them to tempt them, should 'stand at their right hand' to accuse them at the tribunal of God; that when tried, they would be convicted and 'condemned,' and even their 'prayer' would be abomination in the sight of the Lord, as being offered without true contrition and repentance, without faith, hope, or charity. Such is the wretched state of the Jews, estranged from God, and in bondage to the devil; such the prayers which, from hardened and malignant hearts, they continually utter, for the excision of all Christians, and for the extirpation of that blessed name on which Christians call. These prayers, instead of lightening the burden of their sins, certainly add to its weight. Enable us, O Lord Jesus, to resist Satan as a tempter, that he may not be our accuser; and grant us always so to pray, that our prayers may be heard.

8. *His days shall be few; and another shall take his office.*

This is the verse which St. Peter hath cited and applied in his discourse to the disciples, at the election of Matthias into the place of Judas. 'Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity, and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.—For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let



his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and his bishopric let another take.' The former of these two citations is made from Ps. lxxix. 25, the latter is a part of the verse now before us. If Judas, therefore, be the person whose destruction the sufferer foretelleth, the person speaking in this prophetic Psalm must of necessity be our Lord himself, who suffered by the treachery of Judas. In Ps. lxxix. 25, the prediction is in the plural number, 'Their habitation shall be void'; yet St. Peter applies it, in the singular number, to Judas. The passage in our Psalm is singular, yet applicable not to Judas only, but to the whole nation of the Jews; whose 'days,' after they had crucified the Lord of glory, 'were few;' who were dispossessed of the place and 'office' which they held as the church of God, and to which, with all its honours and privileges, the Gentile Christian church succeeded in their stead, when the Aaronical priesthood was abolished, and that of the true Melchizedek established for ever.

9. *His children shall be fatherless, and his wife a widow.* 10. *His children shall be continually vagabonds, and beg; they shall seek their bread also out of their desolate places.*

If, by the wretched death of Judas, his wife became a widow, and his children orphans, vagabonds, and beggars, their fate was but a prelude to that of thousands and ten thousands of the same nation, whose husbands and fathers came afterwards to a miserable end, at the destruction of Jerusalem. Their children, and children's children, have since been 'continually vagabonds upon the earth, in the state of Cain, when he had

his righteous brother, not cut off, but  
 only preserved for punishment and woe.  
 Nothing of their own, they roam through  
 of the world, civilized or barbarous, the  
 contempt of mankind. And even if they  
 to amass wealth, their unparalleled avarice  
 leaves them poor and beggarly in the midst of

Dr. Hammond, in his Annotation on  
 ver. 12:—"By this is described, in a very lively  
 the condition of the Jewish posterity, ever  
 since their ancestors fell under that signal ven-  
 eration for the crucifying of Christ. First, their  
 desolations and vastations in their own country,  
 ejected thence; secondly, their continual  
 wanderings from place to place, scattered over the  
 face of the earth; and, thirdly, their remarkable  
 poverty, keeping them always poor and beg-  
 garly, never so rich, and continually labour-  
 ing toiling for gain, as the poorest are wont  
 to do. This is continually the constant curse  
 upon this people wheresoever they are scat-

*extortioner, or, creditor, shall catch, or,  
 what he hath; and the stranger shall spoil  
 him. 12. There shall be none to extend mercy  
 neither shall there be any to favour his  
 children.*

The destruction of Jerusalem, how often  
 the race been seized, pillaged, stripped, and  
 despoiled, by prince and people, in all the na-  
 tion of the known world; none appearing, as in  
 ver. 12, to 'favour and extend mercy' to them!

Thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no  
 one will save thee.—The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours,

" They have had no nation, none to avenge their grievous wrong, which the Lord God of their fathers had ordained they should suffer times, and in all places, wheresoever they should come, without redress. Nay, their generations have been so odious and preposterous, that the Christian magistrates had conspired for their good, they would themselves have certainly provoked their own misery." Thus saith our excellent divine, the learned and pious Dr. Lightfoot, vol. i. p. 142 and 135; whose reflections on the history of the Jews, at and since their destruction, it were to be wished that every Christian should peruse. For, as he himself observes, " Parents, whether bodily or spiritual, should be as careful to instruct their children as the Lord hath done to these Jews, as the angels should have been to tell their sons what he had done to Pharaoh." Ibid. p. 452.

13. *His posterity shall be cut off, and in generation following, their name shall be blotted out. The iniquity of his fathers shall be revealed unto the Lord, and the sin of his mother shall be blotted out.* 15. *They shall be before him continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.*

The traitorous and rebellious ' posterity ' traitorous and rebellious parents, suffered an ' erasure ' by the Roman sword, and ' in the generation following, their name,' as as a church and civil state was ' blotted out ' of the list of states a

shall a nation which thou knowest not, eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed away.' Deut. xxviii

doms upon earth. 'The iniquity of their fathers,' which they had filled up, 'was remembered with Jehovah, and the sin of their mother,' that is, perhaps, of the synagogue of Jerusalem, now in bondage with her children, 'was not blotted out; that upon them might come all the righteous blood shed, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, whom they slew between the temple and the altar.' Matt. xxiii. 35. The blood of the prophets cried for vengeance against those who crucified the Lord of the prophets. God hid not his face any longer from all these horrible transgressions, but 'they were before him continually,' and occasioned him to 'cut off the memory' of his people, once precious and fragrant, 'from the earth;' so that while apostles and martyrs are annually commemorated with honour, and their good deeds, blossoming out of the dust, perfume the church, and delight the souls of the faithful, the names of 'Judas' and 'Jew' are never mentioned but with contempt and abhorrence.

16. *Because that he remembered not to show mercy; but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.*

The crime which brought upon its perpetrators all the above-mentioned judgments and calamities, is here pointed out too plainly to be mistaken. They 'remembered not to show mercy' to him who showed it to all the world; they 'persecuted' him who for our sakes became 'poor,' and who condescended to ask of his creatures water to drink; they betrayed and murdered the lowly and afflicted Jesus, whose 'heart' was 'broken' with sorrow for their sins, and with a sense of the punishment due to them. How long will it be, ere the brethren of

this most innocent and most injured Jo  
one to another, We are verily guilty  
our brother, in that we saw the anguish  
when he besought us, and we would  
therefore is this distress come upon  
xl. 21.

17. *As he loved cursing, so shall it come  
as he delighted not in blessing, so shall it  
him.* 18. *As he clothed himself with cursing  
with his garment, so shall it come into his  
water, and like oil into his bones.* 19.  
*unto him as the garment which covereth him  
a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.*  
*This shall be the reward of mine adversary.*  
*the Lord, and of them that speak evil  
soul.*

They who reject Christ, reject the  
'blessing,' and choose a 'curse' for the  
and this portion, when they have finally  
choice, will certainly be given to them in  
sure. The curse that lighted on the Jew  
is resembled, for its universality and ad  
'garment,' which covereth the whole m  
'girded' close about his loins; for its di  
penetrating nature, to 'water,' which,  
stomach, passeth into the 'bowels,' and i  
through all the vessels of the frame; a  
which imperceptibly insinuates itself in  
'bones.' When that unhappy multitude  
before Pontius Pilate, pronounced the v  
blood be on us and on our children,' 1  
25, then did they put on the envenome  
which has stuck to and tormented the  
since; then did they eagerly swallow

draught, the effects whereof have been the nation and misery of 1700 years! If such, in world, be the 'reward of Messiah's adversaries, f those who spake evil against him,' what hereafter be the vengeance inflicted on those crucify him afresh, and put him again to an shame?' Heb. vi. 6. And what will be the ion of the sentence, 'Go, ye cursed,' upon dies and souls of the wicked? how will it at ffect all the senses of the former, and all the ies of the latter, with pain, anguish, horror, despair! Think on these things, ye sinners; le, and repent!

*But do thou for me, O God the Lord, Heb. ah the Lord, for thy name's sake : because thy is good, deliver thou me. 22. For I am poor esdy, and my heart is wounded within me. 23. gone like a shadow when it declineth : I am up and down like a locust. 24. My knees are through fasting, and my flesh faileth of fatness. became also a reproach unto them : when they l upon me they shook their heads.*

this last part of the Psalm, Messiah petitioneth deliverance, urging to the Father his power as d,' the honour of his ' name,' and the greatness s ' mercy.' He then pleadeth his own humili- and affliction, his ' poverty,' and ' heart'-felt y of grief. Drawing towards the evening of mortal life, he compareth himself to a ' shadow, ining,' and about to vanish from the earth, re he hath no rest, being persecuted from place lace, as a ' locust' is driven hither and thither he stormy wind and tempest; while enfeebled emaciated by frequent ' fastings,' and long

want of food during his passion, he was ready to sink under his burden; and what aggravated all his sufferings, was, that he met with no pity and compassion from those around him; his enemies 'reproached' and 'reviled him, shaking their heads, and saying, Ah! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself,' &c. Mark, xv. 29. Nor are we to suppose our Lord thus praying for his natural body only, but also for his mystical body, the church, that from all distresses, persecutions, and insults the members of that body may in time be delivered, like their blessed Head, by a joyful resurrection to eternal life.

*26. Help me, O Lord, my God; O save me, according to thy mercy. 27. That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou Lord hast done it.*

The resurrection of Christ was to be the great demonstration of Jehovah's power; and it was published as such by the apostles to all the nations of the world, who thereupon believed, and were converted. The Jews alone hardened their hearts against that proof, and continued impenitent.

*28. They will curse, but thou shalt bless: when they arise, they shall be ashamed; but thy servant shall rejoice. 29. Mine adversaries shall be clothed with shame: and they shall cover themselves with their own confusion as with a mantle.*

The apostate sons of Israel, though they have been so long 'confounded' and blasted by the breath of heaven's displeasure, yet continue 'cursing' and blaspheming, as it is here foretold that they should do. But God hath 'blessed' his Son

, and through him all nations, who have been  
 ted into his family, and made his children by  
 sm; yea, and they shall be blessed, and enter,  
 ousands and millions, into the 'joy' of their  
 , in that day when his crucifiers shall have no  
 ring' but their own 'shame' and 'confusion.'

*. I will greatly praise the Lord with my mouth :  
 I will praise him among the multitude. 31. For  
 all stand at the right hand of the poor, to save  
 from those that condemn his soul.*

he former of these two verses is parallel to that  
 h St. Paul citeth from Ps. xxii. 22. 'He that  
 ifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of  
 for which cause he is not ashamed to call  
 brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto  
 brethren; in the midst of the church will I  
 praises unto thee.' Heb. ii. 11. Great is the  
 f the redeemed upon earth; greater will it be,  
 the resurrection of the dead, in the courts of  
 en. Jesus, unjustly put to death, and now  
 again, is a perpetual advocate and intercessor  
 is people, ever ready to appear on their behalf  
 ist the iniquitous sentence of a corrupt world,  
 the malice of the grand accuser.

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*Twenty-third Day.—Morning Prayer.*

### PSALM CX.

UMENT.—In this Psalm David prophesieth concerning,  
 the exaltation of Christ; 2. the sceptre of his kingdom;  
 the character of his subjects; 4. his everlasting priesthood;  
 3. his tremendous victories and judgments; 7. the means  
 his obtaining both kingdom and priesthood, by his suffer-



ings and resurrection. Parts of this prophecy are cited and applied in the New Testament, by our Lord himself, Matt. xxii. 43; by St. Peter, Acts, ii. 34; by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 25; Heb. v. 6. The church, likewise, hath appointed it as one of the proper Psalms to be read on Christmas-day. It appertaineth literally and solely to King Messiah.

1. *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*

We are here informed of Jehovah's eternal and unchangeable decree concerning the kingdom of Messiah, its extension, power, and duration. The Messiah should, after his sufferings, be thus exalted was determined in the divine counsel and covenant before the world began. Whether we suppose the Psalmist to be speaking of that determination, or of its actual accomplishment at the time of Christ's ascension into heaven, it maketh no great difference. The substance of the decree is the same. It was addressed by the Father to the Son, by Jehovah to Messiah, whom David in spirit styleth, 'אדני, 'my Lord;' one that should come after him, as his offspring according to the flesh; but one, in dignity of person and greatness of power, far superior to him, and to every earthly potentate; King of kings, and Lord of lords; God and man united in one person. To this person it was said by the Father, 'Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool;' in other words, Seeing, O my Son Messiah, thou hast glorified me on the earth, and finished the work which I gave thee to do, the great work of man's redemption; take now the throne prepared for thee from the foundation of the world; behold, all power is given unto thee; enter upon thy mediatorial kingdom, and reign till every opposer shall have submitted himself to thee,

and death shall have felt thy all-conquering

*he Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out  
: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*

In the foregoing verse David related the words by the Father to the Son. In this, he himself as a prophet, directeth his speech to King Messiah, predicting the glorious consequences of his glorification, and the manner in which 'his enemies' are to be made 'his footstool.' The 'rod,' 'strength,' of Christ's 'strength,' is his word, accomplished by his Spirit. The law was given to Israel at Sinai, but the gospel went forth from 'Sion;' 'preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem,' Luke, xxiv. 47; there began the spiritual reign of Jesus; there were the first converts and from thence the faith was propagated to the apostles, to the ends of the earth. This seeing beforehand, cries out, 'Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies!' Go on, victorious; plant the standard of thy cross among the ranks of the adversary; and, in opposition to the Jew and Gentile tumultuously raging against thee, erect and establish thy church throughout the world! This was accordingly done with glorious speed and success; and the church, reared and established among the nations, has been as marvellously preserved, 'in the midst of enemies,' unto this day; yea, and the world sooner be destroyed than she shall cease to be served.

*thy people shall be willing in the day of thy  
in the beauties of holiness: from the womb of  
springing thou hast the dew of thy youth.*

The blessed effects of the gospel, upon its publication, are here foretold. 'The people' of whom he speaks are those given him by his Father, and gathered to him by the preachers of his word. 'The conversion' is the season of their conversion, when the corruptions of nature can no longer hold against the prevailing influences of grace; the heart, will, and affections turn from the world to God; and they make, as the first disciples did, a free and voluntary offer of themselves, as they have, to their Redeemer. Then it is that they appear 'in the beauties of holiness,' adorned with humility, faith, hope, love, and all the graces of the Holy Spirit. With regard to the last clause of this Psalm, Bishop Lowth, in his admired Lectures,<sup>1</sup> has observed, and proved, that it may be fairly construed to this effect: "'More than the dew from the mountains of the morning is the dew of thy progeny;' that is, Thy children, begotten to thee through the gospel, shall exceed in number, as well as brightness and beauty, the spangles of early dew, which the morning discloseth to the delighted eye of the beholder. The whole verse, therefore, containeth a lively picture of the subjects of Christ's spiritual kingdom, who are described by their relation to him as a Father and a people; by their 'willingness' to obey and love him; by their honourable attire, the rich and splendid robes of 'holiness;' and by their modesty, resembling the drops of 'dew' upon the grass."

4. *The Lord hath sworn, and will not lie, saying, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*

<sup>1</sup> Prælect. x.

n Christ's regal office, and the administration  
 ' by the sceptre of his word and Spirit, the  
 t passeth to his sacerdotal office, which was  
 nferred on him by the decree of the Father,  
 at decree, as we are told, ratified by an oath ;  
 ah hath sworn, and will not repent,' or,  
 : his purpose. The oath of God was the  
 seal of heaven, designed to intimate the im-  
 ce of the deed to which it was set, and ' to  
 o the heirs of promise the immutability of  
 nsel.' Heb. vi. 17. Whether this oath  
 at the actual consecration of Messiah to the  
 ood upon his ascension, or at his designation  
 by covenant before the world, sufficient it  
 our assurance and comfort, that it did pass.  
 ve a Priest in heaven, who standeth conti-  
 nually pleading the merits of his sacrifice once  
 upon the cross : ' who ever liveth to make  
 ssion for us ;' and who is ready, at all times,  
 s us, ' by turning away every man from his  
 ies,' Acts, iii. 26 ; by aiding us against our  
 s, and supporting us under our necessities.  
 on, intercession, and benediction are the  
 ranches of the sacerdotal office which our  
 igh Priest now exerciseth for us, and in the  
 e of which the Father hath condescended in  
 ost awful manner to promise that he will  
 ad accept him on our behalf. His priesthood  
 like that of Aaron, figurative, successive,  
 nsistent, but real and effectual, fixed and in-  
 micable, eternal and unchangeable, accord-  
 that pattern of it exhibited to Abraham,  
 the law, in the person of Melchizedek, Gen.  
 —20 ; and discoursed upon at large by the  
 , Heb. vii. throughout.

*5. The Lord upon thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. 6. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries; Heb. the head over much country.*

This is a description of the vengeance which King Messiah should take on his impenitent adversaries. By 'The Lord, or, my Lord, upon thy right hand,' אֲדֹנָי עַל יְמִינִי, the same person must undoubtedly be understood, who is mentioned in the first verse under the same title, אֲדֹנָי, as 'sitting at the right hand of Jehovah.' And the Psalmist, who has hitherto addressed himself to Messiah, or the Son, must be supposed now to make a sudden apostrophe to Jehovah, or the Father; as if he had said, 'This my Lord Messiah, who sitteth at thy right hand, O Jehovah, shall smite through kings in the day of his wrath;' the kings of the earth will endeavour to destroy his religion, and put an end to his kingdom; the Neros, the Domitians, the Dioclesians, the Moxentiuses, the Julians, &c. &c. shall stand up, and set themselves in array against him; but 'the Lamb shall overcome them;' he shall 'judge' and punish the 'heathen' princes, with their people, when in arms against his church; he shall raise up those who shall successfully fight his battles, and strew the ground with their 'carcases.' As Messiah hath done to the antichristian powers of old, so shall he do to all others, before or at his second advent. There is a day of forbearance, during which he will have his church to be, like himself, oppressed and afflicted, humble and resigned; but there is also a future day of wrath and recompense, when the sins and provocations of her

tors shall be ripe for judgment; when their  
is and her sufferings shall be at an end;  
hey shall fall for ever, and she shall ascend  
en.

*He shall drink of the brook, or, torrent, in the  
end therefore shall he lift up his head.*

means, by which Christ should obtain his  
al kingdom and everlasting priesthood, seem  
be assigned. In his 'way' to glory, he was  
k deep of the waters of affliction,' the swollen  
' occurred in the way, and presented itself  
n him and the throne of God. To this 'tor-  
the way,' the Saviour descended; he bowed  
f down, and 'drank' of it for us all; 'and  
re, עלִירוֹ, did he lift up his 'head;' that is,  
se victorious, and, from the valley in which  
rent ran, ascended to the summit of that  
d heavenly mount, where he reigneth, till  
emies be made his footstool.' St. Paul hath

Hebrew word נַחֲלִי signifies, in general, 'a current of  
which may be either a turbid, overwhelming 'torrent,'  
r and gentle 'stream.' In Psal. xviii. 4, it denotes  
ds of ungodliness;' in Psal. xxxvi. 8, it is used to sig-  
'river of divine pleasures.' Hence arises an ambiguity  
terpretation of the words, 'He shall drink of the brook  
ay,' which may be expounded either of the sufferings  
sted, or the refreshments he experienced; as the 'waters'  
osed to be those of 'affliction,' or those of 'comfort.'  
ay the sense is good and true, as it relates to Messiah.  
s,' or the 'overflowing of rivers,' in the Scripture lan-  
ertainly, as Dr. Durell observes, do often denote 'afflic-  
s in Psal. xviii. 4, cxxiv. 4, 5, cxliv. 7, &c. 'the being  
l by them,' is also described by the action of 'drinking,'  
3, lxxv. 8, &c. And the idea of a 'brook in the way,'  
ad, seems to favour this exposition. But the author ad-  
, as becomes him to do, with great deference and submis-  
ce Bishop Lowth and Mr. Merrick are of a different

expressed the same sentiment in literal terms ; ' He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross : wherefore, *διο*, God also hath highly exalted him.' Phil. ii. 8.

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PSALM CXI.

**ARGUMENT.**—This is one of the proper Psalms appointed by the church to be read on Easter-day. It containeth, 1. a resolution to praise Jehovah in the congregation, 2, 3. for his great and glorious works, and, 4. for the appointed memorials of them : 5, 6. his mercies to the church are celebrated, and, 7, 8. the equity and the stability of his counsels declared ; 9. the blessings of redemption and the new covenant are mentioned, as they were prefigured of old in God's dispensation toward Israel. 10. Religion is proclaimed to be true wisdom.

1. *I will praise the Lord, with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.*

Jehovah is to be ' praised,' not only with the voice and the understanding, but with the ' heart,' with the ' whole heart,' and all its affections tuned, like the chords of the son of Jesse's harp, to a song of gratitude and love. Solitary devotion hath, doubtless, its beauties and excellencies ; but how glorious is it to hear the voices of a whole Christian ' congregation' break forth into hallelujahs, like the sound of many waters and the noise of mighty thunderings, while each one, as it were, provokes another to continue the blessed employment, with unremitted attention, and unabated fervour !

2. *The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.*

jects of man's praise are the 'works' of every one of these works, whether in the spiritual system, is 'great.' Nothing from the hands of the divine Artist but excellent and perfect in its kind, adapted with skill to its proper place, and fitted for its use. Happy are they who, with humility and diligence, with faith and devotion, give up to the contemplation of these works, 'pleasure' and delight therein. To them the gate of true science open; they shall understand the mysteries of creation, providence, and government; and they who thus 'seek,' shall find treasures of eternal wisdom.

*work is honourable and glorious: and his reward endureth for ever.*

work,' of all others, in which the 'honourable majesty' of Jehovah appeared, and the Christian church celebrates with this the salvation and exaltation of our nature, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; which contained in it the accomplishment of the ancient promises, and thereby demonstrated to all the world the everlasting truth, fidelity, 'righteousness' of him who made them.

*hath made his wonderful works to be remembered; he hath appointed a memorial for his name: the Lord is gracious and full of compass-*

feasts were 'memorials' of the 'wrought for Israel of old; Christian festivals 'memorials' of the 'wonders' wrought in Christ for mankind, to whom, no less than to Israel,



God hath now showed himself 'gracious and full of compassion.'

*5. He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant. 6. He hath showed his people the power of his works, that he may, or might, give them the heritage of the heathen.*

Agreeably to the 'covenant' which God made with Abraham, as concerning his children according to the flesh, he 'fed' and supported them in the wilderness, he overthrew their enemies by the might of his 'power,' and he put them in possession of Canaan, which before was 'the heritage of the heathen.' Agreeably to the covenant which God made with the same Abraham, as concerning all believers, those 'children of the promise which are counted for the seed,' he feedeth them in the world with the true manna,<sup>1</sup> the bread which cometh down from heaven; he hath again 'showed the power of his works' in the overthrow of idolatry; and again, by the conversion of the nations, given to his church 'the heritage of the heathen;' although, like Israel, she is commanded, and hath had frequent admonitions, not to fix her heart on an earthly Canaan; not to expect any permanent habitation, any enduring city here below; not to stop short of an eternal and heavenly rest.

*7. The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. 8. They*

<sup>1</sup> 'Escam dedit'—Manna: quæ cætera Dei mirabilia in memoriam revocabat: unde in arcâ servari jussa. Exod. xvi. 32. Erat autem eucharistiæ figura, quæ verè divini amoris momentum æternum.—Bossuet.

*and fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.*

In all God's dispensations towards his faithful servants, and towards his impenitent adversaries, we admire and adore his 'verity' in the performance of his promises to the former, and his 'justice' in executing his vengeance on the latter. Thus the time of fulfilling his promise to Abraham came not till the iniquity of the Amorites was full. The same is the same as to the coming of Christ, the conversion of Paganism, the deaths of persecutors, the rise and fall of nations, the conversion or excision of individuals, and every other instance of mercy or judgment. Another property of God's works is, that, being 'done in truth and uprightness, they stand fast for ever;' and will then appear in perfect glory and beauty, when all the toils and labours of man shall be no more.

*9. He sent redemption unto his people, he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend, or terrible, is his name.*

He who 'sent redemption' to Israel by the hand of Moses, hath now 'sent redemption' by the power of Jesus to all the world: he who, at Mount Sinai, established his 'covenant' with his people, and gave them a law, hath now established his 'covenant' with the Gentiles, and published to them his gospel from Sion. 'Holy is his name,' and therefore 'terrible' to those who, under all the means of grace, continue unholy.

*10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.*

The 'fear of God' is the first step to salvation; it exciteth a sinner to depart from evil, and to pursue good; to implore pardon, and to sue for grace; to apply to a Saviour for the one, and to a Sanctifier for the other. Religion is the perfection of wisdom; the best practice the best instructor, and thanksgiving the sweetest recreation.

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### PSALM CXII.

**ARGUMENT.**—The Psalmist enumerateth the blessings attending the man who feareth Jehovah; 1. the pleasure he taketh in doing his will; 2. The prosperity of his life; 3. the plenteousness in his house; 4. his comfort in tribulation; 5. his internal joys; 6. the honour with which he is rewarded; 7, 8. his holy confidence in God; 9. his good works and the reward of them; 10. the envy, wretchedness and perdition of the wicked. The blessings of the gospel are spiritual and eternal; and they are conferred upon the members of the Christian church through Christ their head; he is the pattern of all righteousness, and the giver of all

1. *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, he shall delighteth greatly in his commandments; he shall be blessed, and he shall delighteth greatly in his commandments.*

The man who duly 'feareth God,' is delivered from every other fear; the man who 'delighteth in God's commandments,' is freed from every inordinate desire of earthly things; and such a man must needs be 'blessed.' Of this kind was the blessedness, O holy Jesu, on whom did rest the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah, and whose 'meat' it was 'to do the will of the Father that sent thee, and to finish his work.' Isa. : John, iv. 34.

*His seed shall be mighty upon earth; the gene-  
ry of the upright shall be blessed.*

ther's piety derives the benediction of Hea-  
on his children. The posterity of faithful  
am were often spared and favoured on ac-  
of their progenitor; as the whole family of  
ers, Abraham and all, are blessed in Him  
the great Father of that family, and the  
r of their salvation.

*Wealth and riches shall be in his house : and  
righteousness endureth for ever.*

metimes pleaseth God to bestow on his ser-  
as he did on Israel of old, the good things  
world. And a rich man is therefore hap-  
an a poor man, because 'it is more blessed  
: than to receive.' Acts, xx. 35. But the  
'wealth' of Christians is of another kind;  
'riches' are such as neither moth can cor-  
nor thief steal. Grace and glory are in the  
' of Christ, and everlasting 'righteousness'  
portion of his children.

*Into the upright there ariseth light in the  
ss; he is gracious and full of compassion,  
righteous.*

ile we are on earth, we are subject to a three-  
darkness;' the darkness of error, the dark-  
of sorrow, and the darkness of death. To  
these, God visiteth us, by his word, with a  
old 'light;' the light of truth, the light of  
rt, and the light of life. The Christian's  
r is framed after the pattern of this Master;  
e is ever ready to show to others that 'love'  
mercy' which have been shown to him.

*5. A good man sheweth favour and lendeth :  
will guide his affairs with discretion.*

The former part of this verse may be rendered with a little variation, 'It is well with the man who is gracious and communicative.' Ill-nature and avarice are their own tormentors: but love and liberality do good to themselves by doing it to others and enjoy all the happiness which they cause. It is not God's intention, that any of the talents which he bestowed upon us should lie dead, but that our brethren should have the use of them; even Christ received the Spirit to communicate it to us and our salvation is his glory and joy. The latter part of this verse is likewise capable of a different and, indeed, a more literal translation: 'He will support, or maintain, his words, or his transactions in judgment;' that is, he who thus employeth his talents for the benefit of mankind, will be able to render a good account to his Lord who intrusted them with him.

*6. Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the  
righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.  
He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart  
is fixed, trusting in the Lord. 8. His heart is ex-  
ulted, he shall not be afraid, until he see his de-  
struction upon his enemies.*

Nothing can deprive the person here described of his felicity. When his work is done, his body will go to its repose in the dust, but the 'memory of his name and of his good deeds will be as fresh as the morning breeze, and fragrant as the flower of the spring. 'He feareth no evil report no blast of slander and malice can touch him;'

things of calamity and destruction can shake his confidence in God; but he will hear the trump of judgment, and behold the world in flames, rather with joy than with dread; as knowing, by those signs, that the hour of his redemption is come, when 'he shall see his enemies,' and even death, the last of them, under his feet.

9. *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.*

His riches are not hoarded up, but 'dispersed' abroad; and that not by others after his death, but by himself in his life-time; 'He hath dispersed.' They are not squandered in the ways of vanity and folly, but 'given to the poor;' nor are they given indiscriminately and at random, but 'dispersed,' like precious seed, with prudence and discretion, according to the nature of the soil, and at proper season, so as to produce the most plentiful harvest. Therefore 'his righteousness endureth for ever;' its fruits and its good report are lasting among men, and it is never forgotten before God, who hath prepared for it an eternal reward. 'His horn shall be exalted with honour, in glory;' whatever may be his lot upon earth, and even there the charitable man will frequently be had in 'honour,' at the last day, certainly, when the thrones of the mighty shall be cast down, and the sceptres of tyrants broken in pieces, then shall he lift up his head, and be exalted to partake of the 'glory' of his Redeemer, the author of his faith, and the pattern of his charity, who gave himself for us, and is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

10. *The wicked shall see it, and be grieved shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away; the of the wicked shall perish.*

The sight of Christ in glory, with his saints, in an inexpressible manner, torment the cruc of the one, and the persecutors of the others; will show them the hopes and wishes of their versaries all granted to the full, and all their 'desires' and designs for ever at an end; it excite an envy which must prey upon itself, duce a grief which can admit of no comfort, birth to a worm which can never die, and blo those fires which nothing can quench.

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### PSALM CXIII.

ARGUMENT.—The servants of God are, 1. exhorted to his name, 2. at all times, and, 3. in all places, on account of his power and glory, 6—8. of his mercy in redemption, and, 9. making the Gentile church to be a joyfurther of children. This Psalm is appointed to be read Easter-day.

1. *Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord.* 2. *Blessed be the name of the Lord, from this time forth, and for evermore.*

Christians are the 'servants' of Jesus Christ and a most delightful part of their service is to 'praise' his holy and saving 'name' in the church, which now useth this Psalm among others, with it 'blesseth the name' of her Lord Saviour, from age to age. The Psalmist witnessed and prayed that this might be done, and he saw that it would be done, while the world sh

st, upon earth, and afterwards 'for evermore' in heaven.

3. *From the rising of the sun unto the going down the same, the Lord's name is to be praised; or, is wised.* 4. *The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.*

At the diffusion of the gospel through the world, the name of Christ was praised 'from the east to the west,' in churches everywhere planted by the apostles and their successors: and the grand subjects of joy and triumph among believers were, the superiority of their Master over the 'heathen nations' and their idols; the exaltation of 'his glory above the heavens,' and all the powers herein; the might of his arm, and the majesty of his kingdom.

5. *Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high?* 6. *Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in earth.*

Highly as our Lord is exalted above this system, above these heavens and this earth of ours, yet he condescendeth to regard every thing that passeth here, and to make us, the inhabitants of this lower world, and, for our sakes, all the other creatures in it, the objects of his peculiar care and paternal love.

7. *He raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;* 8. *That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.*

Such is his mercy to the poor sons of Adam in their fallen estate, that from the lowest and most object condition, from the pollutions of sin and



from the dishonours of the grave, he raiseth to righteousness and holiness, to glory and immortality; he setteth them on high, with the infants of the heavenly Jerusalem, 'with the people of his people,' the leaders of the armies above angels and archangels before his throne. What the exaltation of the meanest beggar from a hill to an earthly diadem, when compared that of human nature from the grave to the throne of God! Here is honour worthy our ambition, honour after which all are alike invited to a crown which all may obtain, who strive worthily and faithfully; and of which, when once obtained, no man can ever deprive the possessors.

9. *He maketh the barren woman to keep and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise the Lord.*

In the sacred history of the Old Testament meet with frequent instances of barren women who were miraculously made to bear children. Joseph, Samson, and Samuel were thus born; Sarah, Rachel, the wife of Manoah, and Hannah. To these may be added, from the history of the New Testament, the instance of Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, and mother of St. John Baptist. These examples may be considered as preludes to that marvellous exertion of God's power, whereby the Gentile church, after so many years of barrenness, became, in her old age, a fruitful parent of children, and the 'mother of all.' Wherefore it is written, 'Sing, O barren thou that didst not bear; break forth into sin and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate woman than the children of the fruitful woman.'

the children of the married wife, saith the  
1. Isa. liv. 1; Gal. iv. 27.

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*Twenty-third Day.—Evening Prayer.*

## PSALM CXIV.

**COMMENT.**—This is another of the Psalms appointed by the church to be read on Easter-day. It celebrates the exodus of Israel from Egypt, and the miracles wrought for that people, prefiguring the redemption of our nature from sin and death, and the wonders of mercy and love wrought for us by Jesus Christ.

*When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; 2. Judah his, that is, God's, sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.*

When Jehovah delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt, he chose them for his peculiar people; his presence resided in their camp, as in a 'sanctuary,' or temple; and he ruled them, as an earthly king exerciseth sovereignty in his 'dominions.' The world, and the Prince of this world, are to us what Egypt and Pharaoh were to Israel. The redemption of our nature, by the resurrection of Christ, answereth to their redemption by the hand of Moses. When we are baptized into the death of Christ, we share in his resurrection of our Lord, we renounce the world, its pomps and vanities; and should, therefore, quit its corrupt 'language,' manners, and customs, with as much alacrity and expedition, as 'the family of Jacob' left those of Egypt. We are the 'sanctuary,' the temple, in which Christ dwelleth

by his Spirit; we are the subjects of his spirit; 'kingdom,' we are his peculiar people; in one word, we are his 'church,' and succeed, as such, to the titles and privileges formerly conferred on Israel.

3. *The sea saw it and fled; Jordan was back.*

Although forty years intervened between the two events here mentioned, yet, as the circumstances were of a similar nature, they are spoken of together. In the passage of Israel through the Red Sea, we may contemplate our passage from a life of sin to a life of righteousness through the waters of baptism; as our translation from death to life eternal, is figured by their entrance into the promised land through the river Jordan. The waters in both cases are poetically represented as the visible of their Creator's presence, and by their retreating, and opening a path for the people to follow, we are taught, that if we continue faithful, all our hindrances will be removed in our way to heaven.

4. *The mountains skipped like rams, and the hills like lambs.*

The tremours of Mount Sinai and the neighbouring hills, when the law was given, afforded a specimen of that power which was afterwards exerted in the overthrow of idolatry, and the bringing down of every high thing that exalted against the gospel at its publication. 'See, therefore, that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for they escaped not, who refused him that spake from earth, much more shall not we escape, if we refuse him that speaketh from heaven;

ce then shook the earth ; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth, but also heaven.' Heb. xii. 25.

5. *What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest ;  
u, Jordan, that thou wast driven back ?* 6. *Ye  
mountains, that ye skipped like rams ; and ye little  
l's, like lambs ?* 7. *Tremble, thou earth, at the  
presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of  
Jacob.*

If the divine presence hath such an effect upon inanimate matter, how ought it to operate on rational and accountable beings ? Let us be afraid, with an holy fear, at the presence of God, in the world by his providence, and by his Spirit in our consciences ; so that we may have hope and courage the day when he shall arise to shake terribly the earth ; when ' every island shall fly away, and the mountains shall be no more found.' Rev. xvi. 20.

8. *Which turned the rock into a standing water,  
a flint into a fountain of waters.*

He who brought water out of the sacramental rock in the wilderness, hath since caused rivers of living water to flow through the world, from the rock of our salvation ; nay, he hath dissolved the dry hearts of sinners, and made to spring up in them fountains of this water of life. For these great instances of his power and his love, we are ought to bless his holy name, when we sing this psalm, as an evangelical hymn, on the day of our Lord's resurrection.

## PSALM CXV.

**ARGUMENT.**—The church, 1, 2. prayeth that God would glorify himself in her salvation; 3. she declareth her faith in him; 4—8. exposeth the vanity and folly of idolatry; 9—11. exhorteth her children to rely upon Jehovah; 12—15. foretelleth how he will bless, prosper, and increase his people; 16—18. never suffering the voice of praise and thanksgiving to cease upon the earth.

1. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.* 2. *Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?*

From these two verses it is evident that this Psalm is not a thanksgiving for victory, but a petition for deliverance. God is entreated to 'give glory,' by such deliverance, 'not to us,' to our works or endeavours, but 'to his own name;' he is requested to vouchsafe salvation, not on account of our merits, but of his 'mercy,' which inclined him to be gracious; of his 'truth,' which disposed him to fulfil his promises; and of his 'honour,' that the enemy may not have occasion to blaspheme him, and reproach his servants, as if their Master either could not or would not help them in the day of their distress. 'Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?'

3. *But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased: or, he doeth whatsoever he pleaseth.*

Should the insulting adversary ask the above question, 'Where is now their God?' the faithful are ready with their reply, 'Our God is in the heavens;' he is, where he ever was, upon his glo-

ous throne, high over all the kingdoms of the world, and the powers of created nature; from thence observeth and ordereth all things here below; what we suffer is by his appointment; and, at his good time and pleasure, he both can and will relieve us: 'he doeth whatsoever he pleaseth.'

*4. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of man's hands. 5. They have mouths, but they speak not; as have they, but they see not. 6. They have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not. 7. They have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat.*

A beautiful contrast is formed between the God of Israel and the heathen idols. He made every thing, they are themselves made by men; he is in heaven, they are upon earth; he doeth whatever he pleaseth, they can do nothing; he seeth the distresses, heareth and answereth the prayers, accepteth the offerings, cometh to the assistance, and effecteth the salvation of his servants; they are blind, deaf, and dumb, senseless, motionless, and impotent. Equally slow to hear, equally impatient to save in time of greatest need, will every worldly idol prove, on which men have set their affections, and to which they have, in effect, said, 'Thou art my God.'

*8. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.*

Idolaters, like the objects of their worship, are rather lifeless images than real men. What our Lord said of the Jews is applicable to them, and indeed to all who reject the knowledge of the true God, and the doctrines of salvation: 'Having eyes

they see not, having ears they hear not the things which belong unto them; they hear not the word of instruction; they speak not of religion and of heaven; they work not the work of charity; they walk not in the path of commandments; they are spiritually dumb, lame, and impotent; and they are destroyed, they will perish in

*9. O Israel, trust thou in the Lord for help and their shield. 10. O he that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord; he is their help and their shield.*

Let the men of the world trust in gods, and vainly trust in the works of men or heads; but let the church have confidence in Jehovah, her Saviour; for he alone can be her defender and her strength; especially let her ministers, the priests of Aaron, do this, who are the peculiar people of God, employed continually in the service, designed to build up others in the knowledge of him; let all who have been instructed in the fear of the Lord, trust in him, and suffer any apprehension of danger to separate them from him.

*12. The Lord hath been, or, he will bless us; he will bless the house of Aaron. 13. He that fear the Lord, both small and great, shall increase you more and more. 15. Ye are blessed of heaven and earth.*

when it is applied  
hath been as soon  
yea, and she will  
the Lord her God.'

*ae, that I might fall:*  
Lord is my strength  
salvation. 15. *The*  
*is in the tabernacles*  
*of the Lord doth*  
*of the Lord is ex-*  
*ord doth valiantly.*

herself as victorious  
author of all evil,  
to effect her destruc-  
champion and king,  
ured at the time ap-  
tually, all that should  
'Thou hast thrust  
but Jehovah helped  
rist, from the grave,  
in the words which  
when they had as-  
seen, and beheld their  
: 'Jehovah is my  
s become my salva-  
er doth that sacred  
resurrection of Jesus  
of rejoicing is in the  
'there is a noise of  
camp of the saints;  
th with thanksgiving,  
ndise is restored be-  
semblance of heaven,



they see not, having ears they hear not.' They see not the things which belong unto their peace; they hear not the word of instruction and exhortation; they speak not of religion and the kingdom of heaven; they work not the works of piety and charity; they walk not in the path of the divine commandments; they are spiritually blind, deaf, dumb, lame, and impotent; and when their idols are destroyed, they will perish in like manner.

*9. O Israel, trust thou in the Lord; he is thy help and thy shield. 10. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord; he is their help and their shield. 11. They that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield.*

Let the men of the world make to themselves gods, and vainly trust in the work of their own hands or heads; but let the church repose all her confidence in Jehovah, her Saviour and Redeemer, who alone can be her defender and protector; more especially let her ministers, the sons of the true Aaron, do this, who are the peculiar portion of the Lord, employed continually in his service, and designed to build up others in faith and hope; and let all who have been instructed by their ministers in the fear of the Lord, trust always in him, and suffer any apprehension of danger or distress to separate them from him.

*12. The Lord hath been, or, is, mindful of us; he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron. 13. He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great. 14. The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children. 15. Ye are blessed of the Lord, which are heaven and earth.*

The heart of the Psalmist is full of 'blessing,' and on his tongue is the word of kindness and comfort. The 'blessings' formerly confined to Israel, have since been extended to the whole race of mankind. Jehovah, ever 'mindful' of his creatures, hath visited the world by his Son and by his Spirit; he hath formed a church from among the Gentiles, appointed a priesthood and ministry in it, and given his benediction to both; he hath 'blessed,' with the blessings of grace, 'them that fear him,' of all nations, and of every degree; he hath 'increased' and multiplied his people exceedingly; and the faithful members of the Christian church are now 'the blessed of Jehovah, who made heaven and earth,' and who is, consequently, possessed of all power in both.

16. *The heaven, even the heavens, or, the heavens of heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men.* 17. *The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.* 18. *But we will bless the Lord, from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the Lord.*

He who himself dwelleth in the highest heavens, where he is praised and glorified by angels, hath 'given the earth' for an habitation, at present, 'to the sons of men,' whose duty it is to praise and glorify him here below, as the angels do above. Now as 'the dead cannot praise him,' as they who sleep in the silent grave cannot celebrate him, we may be certain, that he will not suffer his people to be destroyed and extirpated, but will always preserve a church to 'bless him' in all ages, till the end of the world; when the dead shall be raised, and the choirs of heaven and earth shall be united,

to praise and glorify him together before his throne for evermore.

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*Twenty-fourth Day.—Morning Prayer.*

### PSALM CXVI.

**ARGUMENT.**—It is not certain by whom, or upon what occasion, this Psalm was composed. It plainly appears, however, to be a song of thanksgiving for deliverance from trouble, either temporal, or spiritual, or both. To render it of greater use, let it be considered as an evangelical hymn, in the name of a penitent, expressing his gratitude for salvation from sin and death. 1, 2. He declareth his love of God, who vouchsafed to hear his prayer; 3—9. describeth his deliverance out of it, and subsequent peace and comfort. 10, 11. he acknowledgeth himself to have been tempted to despair, but was supported by faith, in the day of trouble; 12. he determineth to receive the cup of salvation, to praise and glorify Jehovah, who thus delivereth the souls of his people.

1. *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my prayer, and my supplications.* 2. *Because he hath inclined his ears unto me, therefore will I call upon him long as I live.*

In the original it is, 'I love,' because Jehovah hath heard,' &c. The soul, transported with gratitude and love, seems at first to express her affection without declaring its object, as thinking that all the world must know who is the person intended. Thus Mary Magdalen, in her conversation, at the sepulchre, with one whom she supposed to have been the gardener, though no previous mention had been made of Jesus, saith, 'Sir, if thou have been here, tell me where thou hast laid him,

<sup>1</sup> Some critics prefer our old version,—'I am well pleased

will take him away.' John, xx. 15. And ought not the love of God to be excited in all our hearts to the consideration that, when we were not able to raise ourselves up to him, he mercifully and tenderly 'inclined' and bowed down 'his ear' to us; 'heard our supplications,' and descended from heaven to help and deliver us? With hope, therefore, and confidence should we 'call upon him,' in all our troubles, 'as long as we live.'

*1. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the snares of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow. 4. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*

These 'sorrows,' or 'bands of death,' once compassed the human race: these 'pains of hell' were ready to seize on every son of Adam. The awakened and terrified conscience of a sinner has felt the oppression of the former, and experienced some foretaste of the latter. In this situation he is described by St. Paul as crying out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?' Let him take the course which the Psalmist took; let him 'call upon the name of the Lord,' even the Lord Jesus, who put himself in the sinner's place, and suffered for him unspeakable 'sorrows and pains;' let him do this, and he shall be saved; and shall sing the praises of his Almighty Saviour, in the words of this beautiful Psalm.

*5. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous: yea, our Lord is merciful. 6. The Lord preserveth the simple: as brought low, and he helped me.*

In the salvation of a sinner we contemplate God's

'grace,' by which the work is effected; his 'teousness,' which causeth him to perform what he hath promised through Christ; his 'mercy,' which induced him to send his Son, and to make this promise. This mercy is the mercy of a parent to his children, such as a parent sheweth to those young and simple ones, who have been overreached and deceived by a crafty adversary; to those who fall, and are unable of themselves to rise again; 'I was brought low, and he helped me.'

*7. Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for thou hast dealt bountifully with thee. 8. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. 9. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.*

That peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost, which the penitent experienceth, the effect and fruit of pardon, afford him some taste of the rest and felicity of heaven; and, accordingly, he speaks as one translated to those happy mansions where there is no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, because there is no more sin. A Christian delivered out of the miseries of this troublesome world, and at rest in Abraham's bosom, would express himself, as one should think, in these terms. Remission of sins ought to be followed by the newness of life, and the resolution of him whose 'soul' hath been 'delivered from death, his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling,' should be this, 'I will walk before the Lord,' as one who is under his inspection, 'in the land of the living,' or as the redeemed in the church; until the time for me to depart hence, and to be numbered with the saints in glory everlasting.

10. *I believed, therefore have I spoken : I was  
greatly afflicted ;* 11. *I said in my haste, all men are  
liars.*

In affliction and distresses, those of the spirit and science more especially, the soul is tempted to despair, and can only be supported by faith exerted itself in prayer : ‘ I believed, and therefore have spoken,’ or ‘ therefore spake I,’ that is, as above, verse 4. ‘ I called upon the name of the Lord ; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.’ And this indeed, though so ‘ greatly afflicted,’ that I had indeed in my haste,’ in my hurry and trepidation occasioned by fear and amazement, ‘ all men are liars ;’ there is no credit to be given to their promises of deliverance ; I am lost and undone for ever. Yet my faith failed not entirely, and, lo, my prayer hath been heard and answered. St. Paul, citing the troubles which came upon him, and the manner in which he sustained them, thus cited the text of the tenth verse : ‘ We, having the same gift of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken : we also believe, and therefore speak ; knowing that he, which raised up our Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.’ 2 Cor. iv. 13, 14.

2. *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his  
benefits towards me ?* 13. *I will take the cup of  
salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.* 14. *I  
will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence  
of all his people.*

The grateful penitent now asketh, what return he will make to his kind Benefactor, for the most valuable of all blessings conferred upon him. And presently resolveth to make the only return in

his power, namely, to acknowledge and declare before men the goodness of Jehovah, ascribing all the glory where it is all due. This he determineth to do, by 'taking the cup of salvation,' which, as Dr. Hammond observes, among the Jews was two-fold; one offered in a more solemn manner in the temple; Numb. xxviii. 7; the other more private in families, called the cup of thanksgiving, or commemoration of any deliverance, begun by the master of the family, and attended, on festival days, with a suitable hymn; such as was that sung by our Lord and his disciples on the night when he advanced that cup into the sacrament of his blood, which hath ever since been to Christians 'the cup of salvation,' and which all penitents should now receive in the church, with invocation, thanksgiving, and payment of the 'vows' made in time of trouble.

*15. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*

The notion of the original word, יקר, in this place, for 'rare,' or 'precious,' must be so taken as not to signify that which is spoken of to be desirable to, or in the presence of, the Lord; for it is the life, not the death, of his servants which is precious, in that sense, to God, the preserver of their lives. But when it is said that their 'death is precious,' it means in effect no more than that it is so considered, it is rated at so high a price by God, as that he will not easily grant it to any one who most desires it of him. Thus far Dr. Hammond. We may add, that much less will God be easily prevailed on to give up his people to death eternal. Rather will he work wonders of mercy and loving kindness to save them; as the penitent happily experienceth in himself.

*O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy  
and the son of thine handmaid; thou hast  
loosed me from my bonds. 17. I will offer to thee the sacri-  
fice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of  
the Lord. 18. I will pay my vows unto the Lord  
in the presence of all his people. 19. In the  
court of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O  
Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.*

The penitent is the 'servant' of God, 'the  
handmaid,' the church, 'loosed from his  
bond, and redeemed from a state of slavery under  
the law, and the devil, that he may serve a  
Master, whose 'yoke is easy and his burden  
light.' This blessed Master is from thenceforth  
the object of his love, duty, and adoration: to  
'offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving,' to  
'payeth his vows,' among his fellow-ser-  
vants in the church on earth; longing for that day  
when, loosed also from the bonds of death  
and grave, he shall be admitted to sing halle-  
lujah with saints and angels, in the 'courts' of the  
temple, even 'in the midst of thee, O Je-  
rusalem,' the holy, heavenly, and glorious city of  
God most High.

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PSALM CXVII.

[REMARK.—This Psalm, like the hundred and tenth,  
is altogether prophetic of the joy that all the  
should conceive, at the coming of the Messiah, to give  
on, first to the Jews, and then to all other nations,  
according to his faithful promise.—Patrick.

*praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him,*



*all ye people. 2. For his merciful kindness towards us : and the truth of the Lord for ever. Praise ye the Lord.*

It is remarkable that of so short a Psalm the second verse is explained, though not the first. Two questions naturally arise, upon reading the second verse of our Psalm; first, who are the 'nations and peoples' who are exhorted to praise Jehovah? secondly, why are they exhorted to praise him? The Psalmist hath given a satisfactory and decisive answer to both these questions, Rom. xv. 8, 9, &c. He says, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles, and laud him, all ye people.' From the apostle's reasoning, the second verse of our Psalm, which he hath cited, may be taken to be a proof that 'the Gentiles,' or the whole world, should one day 'glorify God;' and therefore, the 'people' whom the Psalmist, in the spirit of prophecy, exhorted to 'praise the Lord.' It appears also, why the Gentiles were to glorify God; namely, for his 'mercy,' and 'truth,' in confirming or accomplishing the 'promises' concerning their vocation and conversion, made unto the fathers; 'to Abraham, and his

<sup>1</sup> 'Confirmata—et veritas Domini'—Promiserat enim Deus futurum, ut per Christum, benedictum illud semen, benedicerentur omnes Gentes, Gen. xii. 3; et interprete Apostolo, Gal. iii. 16. Quod cum præstitimus, jam intelligimus verè advenisse Christum, ac Dei firma esse omnia.—Bossuet.

ever; to all believers, whether of the circumcision or the uncircumcision. Such, then, is the 'merciful kindness' of Jehovah, which is said, in the Psalm, to be 'great,' mighty, and powerful, 'toward us;' such his 'truth,' which is affirmed to 'endure for ever;' as the promises were made good to the Gentiles, when the Jews, because of unbelief, had been cast off. Let the hallelujahs of the redeemed be suitable to that 'mercy,' and co-eternal with that 'truth.'

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 PSALM CXVIII.

**ARGUMENT.**—In this Psalm, a king of Israel appears leading his people in solemn procession to the temple, there to offer up the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, for the marvellous deliverance from his enemies, and a glorious victory gained over them. After inviting the whole nation, 1—4. to join with him upon this joyful occasion, he describeth at large, 5—18. his danger, and his deliverance from it, which latter is wholly attributed to the power and goodness of Jehovah. After this, as Mr. Mudge has rightly observed, there ensues a kind of sacred dialogue. Being come to the temple, the victorious monarch speaks the 19th verse; they open the gate, the 20th; he again, as he enters, the 21st; they with him seem to speak the next four verses, to the 25th; the priests of the temple the 26th; the first part to the king, the other to the people; the people the 27th; he the 28th; the 29th is the chorus verse, concluding as it began. The repeated application made of the 22d verse in the New Testament, and the appointment of the Psalm, by the church, to be used on Easter-day, lead us to consider the whole as a triumphant hymn, sung by King Messiah, at the head of the Israel of God, on occasion of his resurrection and exaltation.

1. *O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good :  
Because his mercy endureth for ever.* 2. *Let Israel*

*now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. 3. Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. 4. Let them now that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth for ever.*

The subjects of 'thanksgiving' here proposed are Jehovah's 'goodness' and his 'mercy.' He is the sole fountain of absolute and essential 'goodness,' the source of all excellency and perfection; and his 'mercy' is the channel by which he communicateth this goodness, in an overflowing stream, to his people, who are, therefore, exhorted to praise him. The Christian church is now 'the Israel of God;' her ministers constitute the true 'house of Aaron,' being the spiritual progeny of our great High-priest; and the Gentiles, not the Jews, are they who know and 'fear Jehovah.' Let these all celebrate, for these all have experienced, the benefits and blessings of 'eternal mercy,' by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

*5. I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.*

The true value of every deliverance is to be estimated by the nature of the 'distress' which required it. The rescue of David from his enemies, or that of Israel from captivity, might deservedly be extolled with the songs of Sion. How much more, then, is the church universal bound to lift up her voice in honour of Jehovah, who hath redeemed her from her spiritual adversaries, and freed her from the bondage of corruption, through Him who 'died for her sins, and rose again for her justification;' who, in the days of his flesh, being, on her account, in 'distress' and affliction, 'called upon

Jehovah, and was answered,' by an 'enlargement, from the narrow prison of the grave, to a boundless and glorious kingdom !

6. *The Lord is on my side ; I will not fear : what can man do unto me ?* 7. *The Lord taketh my part with them that help me : therefore shall I see my saviour upon them that hate me.*

By frequent experience of the divine power and mercy, from time to time exerted on the behalf of Israel, that nation was instructed to trust in Jehovah ; and, whenever they did so, success and victory never failed to attend their steps. Would not the case be the same with us in all our undertakings, if our faith was right and steadfast in God, who raised up Jesus from the dead, and who hath promised to make us ' more than conquerors ?'

8. *It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.* 9. *It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.*

Armies of ' men,' however numerous, and to appearance powerful, may be routed and dispersed at once. ' Princes' may not be able to help us ; if able, they may fail us, as not being willing to do it ; both able and willing, they may die ere they can execute their purpose. But that hope which is placed in God can never, by these or any other means, be disappointed. As we so often repeat these two verses, let us act agreeably to the declaration which we then make, and, instead of courting the world, by undue compliances, for its detestful smiles and treacherous favours, let us in all circumstances do our duty, and leave the event to God alone. To encourage us in the performance of

such a resolution as this, let it be remembered because our Saviour 'witnessed a good before Pontius Pilate,' and with mee patience resigned himself to the death of for it, therefore God exalted him to honour.

10. *All nations compassed me about : name of the Lord will I, or, I did, de*  
 11. *They compassed me about, yea, they me about : but in the name of the Lord I did, destroy them.* 12. *They compassed like bees, they are quenched as the fire for in the name of the Lord I will, or, I d*  
*them.*

The tenour of the Psalm being one giving for a deliverance already ex seemeth to require that the verb, at each of these verses, should be rendered past time ; not ' I will destroy them,' but ' I destroyed them ;' especially as it is said, ' They compassed me about,' and ' they are quenched as the fire.' David and Israel were encompassed by nations, over whom, through God's assistance, often triumphed ; so the Son of David, of his passion, was surrounded by the multitude of Jews and Gentiles, seeking his after the same example, his mystical church, hath frequently been, on all sides, oppressed and persecuted in the world. But, the power of Jehovah, Christ overcame, and brought down on the right hand of the Majesty. The church, likewise, hath often risen superior to the efforts of her innumerable and malicious enemies, whose fury hath blazed forth against

the sudden fierceness of 'fire,' when it is applied to a heap of dry 'thorns;' and hath been as soon at an end; she hath triumphed, yea, and she will finally triumph, 'in the name of the Lord her God.'

13. *Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall; but the Lord helped me.* 14. *The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.* 15. *The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous; the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly.* 16. *The right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly.*

The church may consider herself as victorious over her great adversary, the author of all evil, who had made his grand effort to effect her destruction, by putting to death her champion and king, Messiah. But Jehovah appeared at the time appointed, to bring him, and, virtually, all that should believe in him, from the dead. 'Thou hast thrust sore at me, that I might fall; but Jehovah helped me.' Risen, therefore, with Christ, from the grave, she proceed to praise Jehovah, in the words which Moses and Israel first used, when they had ascended from the depths of the sea, and beheld their enemies destroyed for ever: 'Jehovah is my strength, and my song, and is become my salvation.' *Exod. xv. 2.* And never doth that sacred cry come round, on which the resurrection of Jesus celebrated, but 'the voice of rejoicing is in the tabernacles of the righteous;' there is a noise of them that sing for joy, in the camp of the saints; the church militant resoundeth with thanksgiving, the voice of melody; paradise is restored below, and earth beareth some resemblance of heaven,

while these transporting hymns are sung in honour of our great Redeemer! He is that 'arm ~~an~~ right hand of Jehovah' which hath 'done ~~vali~~ antly,' which hath crushed our strongest enemy and is very highly 'exalted' over all. 'Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; ~~th~~ right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces ~~th~~ enemy.' Exod. xv. 6.

17. *I shall not die, but live, and declare the work of the Lord.* 18. *The Lord hath chastened me sore but he hath not given me over unto death.*

As Christ is risen, 'we shall not die, but live; we shall not die eternally, but we shall live, in ~~thi~~ world, the life of grace; in the world to come, ~~th~~ life of glory; that we may in both 'declare ~~th~~ works' and chant the praises of God our Saviour. We are 'chastened' for our sins, but 'not ~~give~~ over to death' and destruction everlasting; nay our being 'chastened' is now a proof that we ~~as~~ not so 'given over;' for 'what son is he ~~whos~~ the father chasteneth not?' Heb. xii. 7.

19. *Open to me the gates of righteousness; I ~~will~~ go in to them, and I will praise the Lord:* 20. *This gate, or, This is the gate, of the Lord, into ~~whic~~ the righteous shall enter.* 21. *I will thank thee, fo thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.*

The faithful, like David and his people of ~~all~~ demand admission into the courts of the ~~Lord~~ house, there to praise him for his great and ~~mi~~ifold mercies. But we may extend our ideas ~~mod~~ further, and consider the whole company of ~~th~~ redeemed, as beholding the angels ready to ~~unlo~~ the gates of heaven, and throw open the door.]

be eternal sanctuary, for the true disciples of the risen and glorified Jesus to enter in. 'Open ye,' say believers exclaim in triumph, to those celestial spirits who delight to minister to the heirs of salvation, 'open ye the gates of righteousness,' those gates through which nothing unclean can pass, that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in,' Isa. xxvi. 2, and sing, with our harmonious choirs, the praises of him who sitteth upon the throne; for he hath overcome the harness of death, he hath opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. 'This is the gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter,' to take possession of the inheritance prepared for them, to thank him who hath heard them, and is become their salvation.'

22. *The stone which the builders refused, is become the head stone of the corner.* 23. *This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes.*

Whether this passage had a reference to the case of David,<sup>1</sup> who, as a figure of Messiah, was brought from a state of rejection and persecution to the throne of Israel; or whether there be any truth in a Jewish tradition concerning a certain stone, which, after having been, by the builders of the second temple, thrown aside among the rubbish, was at last found to be exactly fitted for the honourable place of a chief corner-stone, it is neither possible nor needful to ascertain. That the verses belong, in a full, proper sense, to Mes-

<sup>1</sup> David a Säule et aliquandiu à decem tribubus reprobatus, ac tribui Judæ agnitus, deinde omnium princeps; et sub figura ejus Christus à Judæis ac Gentibus impetitus, mox utroque caput, ut ipse interpretatur, Matt. xxi. 42.—Bossuet.



siah, is confessed by the rabbis, and acknowledged by all. No text in the Old Testament is quoted by the writers of the New so often as which we meet with in six different places ; namely Matt. xxi. 42 ; Mark, xii. 10 ; Luke, xx. 17 ; iv. 11 ; Ephes. ii. 20 ; 1 Pet. ii. 4. The substance of the New Testament application of this exposition is, that Jesus Christ is the stone mentioned ; that he was rejected and set at nought by the chief priests and Pharisees, the then rulers of the church ; but that, being chosen of God and precious to him, this most valuable stone despised and rejected of men, thus thrown away as the rubbish, and buried in it, was at length, in such a state, exalted to be the chief corner-stone of the building, the main support of the edifice, a centre of union for Jew and Gentile, the parts of which it consisted ; that this was the will of God, and the admiration of man. And it can be more truly marvellous, than that a person put to death as a malefactor, and laid in the tomb, should from thence arise immortal, and be the head of an immortal society ; should ascend into heaven, be invested with power, and crowned with glory ; and should prepare a way for the children of Adam to follow him into those mansions of eternal bliss ?

*24. This is the day which the Lord hath : we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

Of the day on which Christ arose from the tomb it may, with more propriety than of any other, be affirmed, 'This is the day which Jehovah made.' Then it was that the 'rejected stone' became the 'head of the corner.' A morning

ned which is to be followed by no evening ; a  
 ghter sun arose upon the world, which is to set  
 more ; a day began, which will never end ; and  
 ht and darkness departed, to return not again.  
 r thus saith the Lord to his church by the pro-  
 et Isaiah, 'Thy sun shall no more go down,  
 ther shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the  
 rd shall be thine everlasting light, and the days  
 thy mourning shall be ended.' Isa. lx. 20.  
 ster-day is in a peculiar manner consecrated to  
 m who, by his resurrection, triumphed over  
 th and hell. On that day, through faith, we  
 mph with him ; we 'rejoice and are glad in his  
 vation.'

25. *Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord : O Lord, I  
 eech thee, send now prosperity.* 26. *Blessed be  
 that cometh in the name of the Lord : we have  
 sed you out of, or, you that are of, the house of  
 Lord.*

As a prelude to the triumphant manner in which  
 us Christ, after his resurrection, should ascend  
 the heavenly Jerusalem, he entered the earthly  
 y, before his passion, amidst the acclamations of  
 e multitude, who hailed him as King of Sion, and  
 th palm-branches, the emblems of victory, in  
 air hands, sung before him these words, partly  
 ten from our Psalm, 'Hosanna to the Son of  
 vid : blessed is he that cometh in the name of  
 e Lord : Hosanna in the highest.' The word  
 losanna,' is in the original הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא, 'Save now !'  
 ie form of words used by the people was both a  
 titution and a congratulation ; as if they had said,  
 t us beseech Jehovah, in the language of the  
 indred and eighteenth Psalm, to grant salvation to

the Son of David, and to send us now prosperity under him. Blessed is he who thus cometh, not in his own name and power, but in the name and power of Jehovah, according to the prophecies concerning him, to deliver us from all our enemies. Ratify, O Jehovah, in the highest, or in heaven, these petitions which we make for the salvation and prosperity of our king, that thy blessings upon him and us may be established on earth. Since the resurrection of our Lord, the faithful have expressed, in these two verses, the same wishes and prayers for the increase of his kingdom, and the prosperity of his house and family, of his ministers and his people: 'We bless you that are of the house of Jehovah.'

*27. God is the Lord, which hath showed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.*

As Jehovah hath manifested his power and glory, by raising Christ from the dead; as he hath, by so doing, 'showed us the light' of life and immortality; let us observe the festival which is designed to perpetuate the memory of so great and joyful an event. 'Christ, our passover,' saith an apostle, 'is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast.' 1 Cor. v. 7. Let us keep it, only changing legal for evangelical sacraments and ceremonies; let us go to the altar, not to see a figure of the Lamb of God, as he was to be slain; but to behold a representation of him as he hath been slain; to behold, in figure, his body broken, and his blood poured out; to eat the bread of life and drink the cup of salvation.

*28. Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou*

*t my God, I will exalt thee. 29. O give thanks  
to the Lord, for he is good : for his mercy endureth  
for ever.*

The prophet declareth his resolution to 'praise' and to 'exalt,' to magnify and to glorify, his 'God;' and then concludes, as he began, with exhorting all the world to do the same. Preserve to us, blessed Lord, the use of these divine hymns in thy church, until, at the resurrection of the just, we shall celebrate an Easter in heaven, and sing them new in the kingdom of God.

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*Twenty-fourth Day.—Evening Prayer.*

### PSALM CXIX.

**ARGUMENT.**—This Psalm is divided, (most probably for the advantage of memory,) according to the number of letters which compose the Hebrew alphabet, into twenty-two portions, of eight verses each; and not only every portion, but every verse of that portion, begins with the letter appropriated to it. David must, undoubtedly, have been the author. He describeth, in a series of devotional meditations, the instruction and the comfort which, through all vicissitudes of mind and fortune, he had ever found in the word of God. The many strong expressions of love towards the law, and the repeated resolutions and vows to observe it, will often force us to turn our thoughts to the true David, whose 'meat and drink it was to do the will of him that sent him.' The passages more especially characteristic of him, as well as those which allude primarily to any particular circumstances in the history of the patriarch David, are pointed out in the course of the comment. But the chief design through the whole hath been, to draw forth the lessons of heavenly wisdom and comfort, contained in this interesting composition, for the service of believers, who, while they are accomplishing their pilgrimage and warfare upon earth, should continually solace

themselves with the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, and repair to it as to a fountain, which can never be exhausted. Between the verses of each portion, a connexion is frequently to be traced; but it doth not often seem to extend from one portion to another. The many words employed to express the revelations of God will have distinct significations, denoting different parts or portions of the Scriptures, which it hath sometimes been found of great use to take into consideration, while at others the terms appear to be used promiscuously, in a general sense, and for the sake of variety.

#### ALEPH.—PART I.

1. *Blessed are the undefiled, Heb. perfect, or, sincere in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.*

By sin, misery entered into the world; holiness alone, therefore, can lead us to happiness. 'The law of Jehovah' is the path of life, and by 'walking in the way' we shall attain to the end. But, alas! we are out of the way; we have walked in the law of sin, after the lusts of the flesh; who will direct and strengthen us to walk in the law of God, after the desire of the Spirit? We are fallen from our integrity; who will raise us again? The gospel, which was preached to Abraham before the Mosaic dispensation, and which was prefigured and believed under it, returneth us, to all these questions, answers of peace. The Redeemer hath prevailed for the pardon of our errors; the Redeemer hath raised us from our fallen state; he hath reconducted us to the path of life; in his name we arise and walk; he maketh us righteous, and, consequently, he maketh us 'blessed.' For, 'Blessed are the sincere in the way, who walk in the law of Jehovah.'

2. *Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with their whole heart.*

The divine revelations and institutions, whether the old or the new law, are called God's 'testimonies'; they are the witnesses of his will, and the edges of his love. They are committed to the church, as a precious deposit, or trust, to be by her children 'kept' and observed. In and by these God is to be sought; 'they that seek him with their whole heart,' with ardent and undivided affection, will not to find him, as an instructor and a comforter; and they who find him, find all things, and are 'blessed' indeed.

3. *They also that do no iniquity, they that walk in his ways.*

O blissful state of those who are redeemed from the earth, and all earthly desires, who are delivered from the dominion of sin, who 'follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,' and, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, 'walk in the statutes and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.' Luke, i. 6. Enrol us, O Lord, in the happy number of these thy servants; pardon our offences; give us a new nature, and new desires, averse from sin, and inclined to sanctity; and guard us, that the wicked one touch us not.

4. *Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.*

He who made us, and redeemed us, hath a double right to our service. We are not our own, having been bought with the blood of our Lord; his will, therefore, and not our own, is to be done by us. And his will is, that we should keep 'his precepts diligently,' because in 'keeping' them, and in keeping them 'diligently,' so as not to halt between

God and the world, but to serve one master doth our happiness consist. Now, when the commands of our Superior, and our greatest Benefactor, our Friend, our Father, and our God, coincide with our own interests, temporal and eternal, what pretext can there be for disobedience and rebellion?

*5. O that my ways were directed, or, pre-  
pared and established, to keep thy statutes!*

The faithful soul, enraptured with the contemplation of that blessedness which is the consequence of serving God, but conscious, at the same time, of an inability to attain it, sighs after the refreshing and strengthening influences of divine grace; she beholdeth her Saviour afar off; she beholdeth the beauty and glorious majesty of his heavenly kingdom; she beholdeth the way which leads thither, but she hath not power to walk therein. This consideration caused her to groan earnestly to herself, and at length to breathe forth a wish to the Spirit of truth and love would fix and establish her in a holy course of thinking, speaking, and acting, upon all occasions, and would prevent her from turning aside out of it, to the right hand or to the left.

*6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I  
respect unto all thy commandments.*

All the commandments have the same sanction and the same sanction. He who thinketh of the breach of one, by the observation of it; he who reserveth to himself a licence of in any favourite, darling lust, while, in general, he preserveth the appearance of an example

et, is a hypocrite, and, unless he repent, will be ought to 'shame,' if not before men here, yet fore men and angels hereafter. 'Shame' is the uit of sin; confidence is the effect of righteousness. Wherefore, in all our proceedings, let us ave respect,' not to the opinions of men, to the corrupt customs of the world, or to the deceitful suggestions of our own hearts, but 'to the commandments, to all the commandments of God;' let us, as . John exhorteth, 'abide in Christ;' that when shall 'appear, we may have confidence, and not ashamed before him at his coming.' 1 John, ii. }.

*7. I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.*

Confidence in God will always be productive of joy, and undissembled 'praise' will accompany true conversion. The Scriptures are styled God's 'righteous judgments,' as containing an account of his decrees and determinations concerning us, with a history of cases and precedents, entered upon record for our admonition. By these we are to form our opinions, and to regulate our conduct. And when we shall have so 'learned' these, as to walk according to them, we shall praise God with an upright heart;' our tongues will utter what our hearts feel.

*8. I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.*

The result of our meditations on God's word, and in the advantages of studying, in order to observe his directions, should always be a resolution so to do, and a prayer for grace to execute that resolu-



tion. Lord, we 'will keep thy statutes;' for can do all things, when thou hast shed it abroad our hearts. 'Love worketh no ill;' therefore is 'the fulfilling of the law,' Rom. xiii. 10; mercy will accept what grace enableth us to form. Be thou, therefore, ever with us, and 'sake us not;' or if, at any time, to try our faith to exercise our patience, thou shouldest depart from us, and leave us to ourselves for a time, shorten thy absence, and speedy thy return: 'O for us not utterly!'

#### BETH.—PART II.

9. *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse himself? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.*

Youth enters upon the journey of life, headstrong and inexperienced, with a bias of original corruption, and all the passions awake. In such circumstances, how shall a young man direct his steps, as to 'escape the pollution that is in the world through lust?' 2 Pet. i. 4. He must, for this purpose, take with him the directions to be found in the Scriptures of truth. 'I have written unto the young men,' says the beloved disciple, 'because they are strong, and the word of God abideth in them, and they have overcome the wicked one.' He who became man for our salvation, passed through the state of youth undefiled, that he might, as it were, reclaim and consecrate it anew to God. Let every young man often meditate on this circumstance.

10. *With my whole heart have I sought thee: let me not wander from thy commandments.*

Despairing of sufficient assistance from any other quarter, because no one else can either sh

us the way to heaven, or enable us to walk therein, even if it could be shown, 'with our whole heart have we sought thee,' O God, thy direction, and thine aid; and thou hast promised, that they who seek shall find.' Like sheep without a shepherd are we given to stray; O preserve us from error in principle, and in practice; let us not wander from thy 'commandments.'

11. *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

The young man who would cleanse his way, and take heed according to God's word, must 'lay up that word in his heart;' for from the heart are the 'issues of life,' the thoughts, the words, and the actions; when God ruleth in the heart by his word and Spirit, these become his subjects; then 'the kingdom of heaven is within us,' and all is obedience, peace, and love. Thou art our King, O Lord Jesu; suffer no usurper to possess thy place in our affections; permit no other Lord to have dominion over us.

12. *Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes.*

He who is 'blessed' can make us so: he who delighteth to communicate 'blessing,' will do it, if we ask him by 'teaching us his statutes,' which conform us to his nature, that we may live his life, and bless his name for ever. When the word of God is our lesson, the Spirit of God must be our Master.

13. *With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.*

The best sign that God hath 'taught us his statutes,' and the greatest inducement to him to us still more and more, is a readiness to others partakers of those blessings which we ourselves have received from him. Jehovah fashions the 'lips' of man, and he expects that they shall be employed in his service. 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,' and a stream will always show the nature of the fountain. When we make the Scriptures the subject of conversation, we glorify God, we edify our neighbours, and we improve ourselves.

14. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches.*

Truth and holiness afford to the sincere believer a pleasure more exquisite, as well as more solid and enduring, than that which a miser feels at the acquisition of his darling wealth. Let us not envy the joys of worldly men, no longer be grieved at the prosperity of the wicked. The riches we may always acquire; and, surely, much as the heaven is higher than the earth, much are heavenly joys above earthly, in degree, and duration.

15. *I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.*

Meditation is that exercise of the mind, which it recalls a known truth, as some kinds of creatures do their food, to be ruminated upon, until a nutritious part is extracted, and fitted for the purposes of life. By study we lay in knowledge; by meditation we reduce that knowledge to practice. And we have then duly 'meditated on

recepts,' when in all our proceedings we 'have respect unto his ways,' comparing our actions with the rule of his word.

16. *I will delight myself in thy statutes : I will not forget thy word.*

By frequent meditation and continual practice, the divine 'statutes' will become our 'delight;' and from the pleasures, as well as from the cares of the world, we shall gladly fly to them for recreation and comfort. Of holy exercises there is great variety, and spiritual joys are without number. Lord, make us to 'delight ourselves in thy statutes,' and when we delight in what we learn, we shall easily retain it in memory; 'we shall not forget thy word.'

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GIMEL.—PART III.

17. *Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live and keep thy word.*

In the foregoing parts of the Psalm, we have heard the believer declaring the excellency of God's word, and expressing both his desire and his resolution to observe its directions. He now beseecheth God to remove all impediments, and to accomplish his work in him. And as a man must 'live,' in order to 'work,' the first petition is, that God would 'deal with his servant' according to the measures of grace and mercy, enabling him to 'live,' the life of faith, and strengthening him by the Spirit of might in the inner man, to 'keep the word' of truth, and to walk in the commandments of his blessed Master all his days.

18. *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*

So far are we naturally from being able to 'keep' the word, that we are not able to understand it. The law of God is full of divine and spiritual truths, concealed under literal histories, visible signs, and external ceremonies. To discern these, נִלְמַד, 'wondrous,' because the hidden, mysterious 'things,' our 'eyes,' the eyes of our understanding, must be 'unveiled;' that 'veil' must be taken off, which St. Paul affirmeth to be upon the hearts of the Jews, 'in reading the Old Testament,' and which will continue there until they turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. Then the veil will be taken away, and they will behold him, and the redemption by him, as prefigured in their law, and foretold by their prophets.<sup>1</sup> Pride, prejudice, and interest will compose a veil, through which a Christian shall see as little of the New Testament as a Jew doth of the Old. Lord, convince us of our blindness, and restore us to our sight.

19. *I am a stranger in the earth; hide not thy commandments from me.*

The above request for divine illumination is enforced by this argument, that the petitioner is a 'stranger,' and a sojourner upon 'the earth;' he is travelling through a foreign country, to his native city, where are his kindred, his treasure, and his heart: as a sojourner, he hath renounced the world,

<sup>1</sup> 'Revela oculos meos:' aperi, dispelle umbras, tolle vultum, quo spirituales oculi continguntur. 'Considerabo mirabilia:' ut penitus introspiciam, non literam tantum, ac vult corticem legis, sed arcana spiritualia, puta in sabaothis regulam sempiternam, simplicitatem in azymis, in victimis obedientiam, et ubique Christum.—Bossuet.

ch is therefore become his enemy; as a stranger he is fearful of losing his way; on these accounts he requesteth that God would compensate the loss of earthly comforts, by affording the light of heaven; that he would not 'hide his commandments,' but show and teach them those steps, which he may ascend towards heaven, rejoicing in hope of future glory.

0. *My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.*

Another argument here urged, is that 'longing' in which the soul hath, during her state of darkness below, unto the revelation of God's will. Grieved and vexed at the prospect of sin, vanity, and folly, and finding nothing below that will satisfy the desires of an immortal spirit, she setteth her affections on the better things above, which are proposed in the Scriptures as the proper objects of her wishes. Her appetite for the divine word is such, as that of hunger or thirst, and 'hope deferred maketh the heart sick.' This disposition is not a transient fit, but it is constant and uniform at all times.

21. *Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, because they do err from thy commandments.*

The consideration of the wretched condition of penitent sinners, is another reason why we entreat God to set and to keep us in the way of his commandments. 'Pride' produceth 'error,' and obstinacy in that error; obstinate transgressors reject the call, the covenant, and the terms of the gospel; to such the 'curse' of the law is ratified and sealed, and mercy consigns them over to jus-

tice, which seldom fails to give them some 'rebukes' even in this world, for a foretaste to them and a warning to others.

*22. Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.*

'Reproach and contempt' are liberally bestowed by the world upon men who, being not of it, reprove its deeds by their exemplary conduct. These, to beginners more especially, are sore lets and hinderances in the way of duty; and, after the example of David, we may beseech God to 'remove' them from us, when we suffer them in his cause, and know ourselves to be innocent of the crimes laid to our charge. In the meantime, to comfort ourselves under them, let us remember, that he who alone, in the strict and unlimited sense of the words, could say, 'I have kept thy testimonies,' sustained the utmost degree of 'reproach and contempt' for our sakes, and was patient and resigned under it all, until God 'removed' it from him by a glorious resurrection. There remaineth likewise a resurrection for the mystical body of Christ; and then, 'Wisdom will be justified of all her children.'

*23. Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.*

'Princes' and rulers have often 'sate' in council upon the 'servants' of God, and 'spoken,' in judgment, false things 'against them,' as they did against their blessed Master in the days of his flesh. David hath taught us how to act in such circumstances. We are not to renounce the creed, or the commandments, should it so happen that 'the rulers and the Pharisees' neither believe the former,

nor observe the latter; but rather, we should 'meditate,' more than ever, in the Scriptures; that we may draw from thence comfort in the troubles, and direction in the difficulties which persecution bringeth upon us; always bearing in mind, when princes command any thing contrary to the word of God, that our service is due to a higher Master; 'thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.'

24. *Thy testimonies also are my delight, and my counsellors.*

Pleasure and wisdom, as the world hath ordered matters, are almost incompatible; insomuch that Solomon, relating the experience he had had of voluptuousness, mentions it as a thing out of the ordinary course, that 'his wisdom' all the time 'remained with him.' Eccles. ii. 9. But they who meditate in the word of God, find a pleasure which hath wisdom for its inseparable companion. Their sorrow is dispelled, and their doubts are resolved. For how can he be sorrowful, who sits by the fountain of joy? How can he be long in doubt, who hath the prophets and apostles for his counsellors?

#### DALETH.—PART IV.

25. *My soul cleaveth to the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.*

The Psalmist, in a state of affliction and humiliation, still seeketh relief, by prayer, from the Scriptures. His circumstances vary, but his affection to the word of God continueth the same. Every one, whose affections are set on things below, hath reason to exclaim with David, 'My soul cleaveth to the dust.' From this kind of death we are 'quicken'd,'



or made alive, by the gospel, through that same Spirit which raised Christ from the dead, and which shall raise us also at the last day. Then soul and body, perfected together, shall take their final farewell of earth, and ascend to heaven, where the soul shall feel no passion but the love of God, and the body shall have no employment but to express it.

*26. I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me ; teach me thy statutes.*

We should freely and ingenuously 'declare' to God in prayer for our sins, our temptations, our sorrows, and our undertakings ; it argues love, confidence, and sincerity so to do ; it is a means of acquainting us with our own state, of which generally we are ignorant ; and it will not fail to procure us those aids from above, of which we stand in need. God will 'hear' us ; he will pardon our offences, strengthen us in our trials, dispel our grief, and prosper the work of our hands upon us. These mercies, when received, should incline us to walk worthy of them, and, for that purpose, to beg the further instruction and direction of the divine Spirit ; 'I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me—teach me thy statutes.'

*27. Make me to understand the way of thy precepts ; so shall I talk, or, meditate, of thy wondrous works, or, thy mysteries.*

The heart of the troubled Psalmist is intent upon duty, and the deliverance which he chiefly requesteth is that from ignorance and error. True knowledge cometh from God, and it cannot be too often desired of him. It is pleasant as the light, extensive as the heavens, and more profitable than the treasures of eastern kings. He who is led to

understand' the celestial 'mysteries' of the scriptures, will never want subjects for 'meditation,' and should never permit those subjects either to slip out of his mind, or to lie unimproved in it.

28. *My soul melteth for heaviness : strengthen thou me according to thy word.*

Let us not marvel, if sin bring us to the knowledge of sorrow, since he who 'knew no sin,' was yet, on our account, so intimately 'acquainted with grief.' In the garden, his soul 'melted for heaviness,' and there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening him.' Luke, xxii. 43. Our transgressions deserve an eternity of sorrow ; let us not, therefore, repine at any part of it that may fall to our share in time. No, blessed Jesu ! let us suffer with thee, as both a means and a pledge of our future glorification with thee. Only 'strengthen me according to' the promises in 'thy word.' In this life, all we ask is faith and patience ; faith, to assure us that thou orderest all things for the best ; and patience, to preserve that faith. These were the provisions with which thy best-beloved servants have long travelled through this mortal life. Enable us, upon whom the ends of the world are come, to persevere the same ; that so, when the days of our earthly pilgrimage shall be happily accomplished, we may appear down, with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in thy heavenly kingdom.

29. *Remove from me the way of lying : and grant me thy law graciously.* 30. *I have chosen the way of truth : thy judgments have I laid before me.*

It is plain that 'the way of truth,' in the latter of these two verses, is opposed to 'the way of lying,' or of falsehood, in the former. The one

comprehends every thing in doctrine and practice that is right, and therefore 'true;' the other denotes every thing which is wrong, and therefore 'false.' Of these two ways man hath his choice. God points out to him the former by his word, and offers to conduct him in it by his Spirit. Satan shows him the latter, and endeavours to seduce him into it by his temptations. The Psalmist declareth himself to have 'chosen' God's way, and to have 'laid' the Scriptures 'before him,' as the chart by which he was to direct his course. He therefore prays that the other way may be far 'removed' from him; and that God would vouchsafe him such a thorough acquaintance with the 'way' of truth, as might prevent him from ever wandering into the path of error. How much depends upon the road we choose! How difficult is it, in a divided and distracted world, to choose aright! Yet this choice so important, so difficult, frequently remains to be made by us, when we have neither judgment to choose nor strength to travel!

31. *I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O Lord, put me not to shame.*

Having once chosen our road, it remains that we persevere in it; since better had it been for us never to have known the way of truth, than to forsake it, when known; and we have the same reasons to go on, which induced us to begin; nay, though the love of the world may require novelty and variety to support it, yet, in the blessed union of the soul with its Redeemer, true affection will increase with time and acquaintance. The Psalmist doth not only say, 'I have followed,' but 'I have stuck unto, thy testimonies;' I have adhered

loosely and firmly to them, that temptation has vainly essayed to allure, and persecution has vainly attempted to force me from them. And before he beseecheth God so to continue his love and favour, that he may never, by falling from his steadfastness, disgrace his Master, his love, his brethren, himself, nor be put to shame on the last day. 'O Lord, put me not to shame!'

*2. I will run the way of thy commandments, and thou shalt enlarge my heart.*

The true Christian is always proceeding in the way of godliness, though not always with equal speed. In grief, whether for temporal or spiritual afflictions, the heart is contracted, and the spirits are summoned home to comfort and support it, so that the faculties are left feeble and sluggish; and therefore the progress can be but slow. This was the apostle's case. But even then he promises, that, through the love of God, by sending him joy and gladness, should enlarge his heart, dilate his spirits, and put life and vigour into his actions, he would quicken his heart in proportion, and, with renewed vigour and alacrity, 'run the way' of the divine 'commandments,' until it should have brought him to rest and felicity in the bosom of God.

*Twenty-fifth Day.—Morning Prayer.*

HE.—PART V.

*3. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; I shall keep it unto the end.*

Instruction from above is necessary for the children of God, while they continue in this world. The more we know, the more we shall desire to

know; we shall beg a daily supply of grace, as well as of bread; and a taste of the cluster of Eschol will make us long after the vintage of Canaan: Numb. xiii. 23. Religion is the art of holy living, and then only known when it is practised; as he is not a master of music who can read the notes which compose it, but he who has learned how to take a lesson readily from the book, and play it on his instrument; after which, the pleasure it affords will be a sufficient motive for continuing so to do. 'Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.'

34. *Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.*

Much 'understanding' is needful in order to the 'observation' of the law, that we may know what is commanded, and what is forbidden, and how far; that we may avoid the snares laid for us in the way of duty; that we may respect things according to their due rank and worth; that we may do good works in their proper time, place, and manner; above all, that the affections may be directed by the judgment, and not the judgment by the affections. The law cannot be observed, unless it be understood; and it is understood in vain, unless it be observed; or rather, if it be indeed understood, if there be upon the mind, at all times, a full conviction of divine truths, and their excellency, not only in themselves, but compared with the offers of the world, the flesh, and the devil, then it will certainly operate in hearty obedience. 'Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.'

35. *Make me to go, or, conduct me, in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.*

He who teacheth us the way to heaven must so 'conduct' us in it, and the same grace must give light and strength. The Scripture is our rule, the Spirit is our guide; and, from beginning to end, it is God who inclines, prepares, and enables us 'to go in the' clean and pleasant 'path of his commandments;' a path which leads us far from the noise and pollution of the world, through a paradise of promises and comforts, grateful as the fragrance of early spring, or the incense ascending from the holy altar. Happy the soul that can say to God, 'therein do I delight:' which is, at the same time, a reason for her to ask, and for him to grant, a continuance and perseverance therein.

36. *Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.*

The wit of man may conceive, and his tongue may utter, great things of God and holiness, while his heart is averse from both; therefore David saith, not only 'give me understanding,' but 'incline my heart.' Our true characters are formed by the desires of our hearts, which, not finding satisfaction in themselves, must seek it in something without them. The world offers itself first; and custom, as well as nature, inclineth us to the love of that, and of money, which commandeth all things in it. Such love is contrary to the love of God, being one of the thorns which choke the seed, and render it unfruitful. Therefore the Psalmist requesteth, that his heart may be 'inclined to the livine testimonies, and not to covetousness.' And as God only can change the disposition of the heart, to God he preferreth his petition. It is to be observed, that by the words, 'Incline not my

heart to covetousness,' is meant, 'suffer not heart to be inclined,' or, 'give it not over, to covetousness.'

37. *Turn away mine eyes from beholding van and quicken thou me in thy way.*

'Turn away mine eyes from beholding van and what is there else on earth to behold? V is there which, when possessed, doth not disappoint the expectation conceived of it, the possessors themselves being judges? Solomon took an inventory of the world, and all the best things in it; he set up the account, and the sum total was vanity. 'eye' is the grand inlet of temptation, and by holding, we come to desire and long after, the objects of sense; from which time our affections toward the objects of faith waxeth cold. 'Turn away our 'eyes,' therefore, O Lord, 'from beholding vanity,' and quicken us in thy way;' move the flesh, and the spirit shall live.

38. *Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.*

The 'word' here intended is the word of promise, which the believer entreatheth God to 'confirm, or accomplish, to him by his satisfaction, that so he may walk in the way of truth and life. He pleadeth his title to the promise as a 'servant' of God, and one who 'feared' to offend him.

39. *Turn away my reproach which I fear. thy judgments are good.*

The 'reproach' which we have all most ready to dread, and to pray that God would keep from us here and hereafter, is that of having

n and apostatized from those statutes and precepts' revealed in the Scriptures, which we are to be so 'good,' so pleasant, and so profitable.

*9. Behold, I have longed after thy precepts :  
ken me in thy righteousness.*

The Psalmist appealeth to God, the searcher of hearts, for the truth of the protestation he was bound to make, that the desire of his soul was toward the divine word ; not only toward the precepts, to believe and embrace them, but also toward 'precepts,' to observe and to do them. He therefore prayeth, with confidence, that God would strengthen the work he had begun, and enable him to carry his wishes into execution, by continually quickening' and enlivening him more and more through grace, to finish his course in 'righteousness,' and to obtain that crown which is to be the reward of it.

#### VAU.—PART VI.

*1. Let thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord ;  
and thy salvation, according to thy word.*

Persecution and affliction, of which they never in some way or other, to have their share who are godly in Christ Jesus, should teach us, like David, to fly for refuge to that 'mercy' from whence proceedeth all 'salvation,' temporal and eternal ; and to pray, without ceasing, for the accomplishment of that 'word,' which promiseth to the people of God deliverance out of all their troubles.

*2. So shall I have wherewith to answer him that  
searcheth me : for I trust in thy word.*



A believer, trusting in the promises of God, when the whole world hath forsaken him, and no sign or probability appears of their being fulfilled, is always, among the wicked, an object of scorn and 'reproach.' Such was David when Shimei cursed him. Such was our blessed Master, when men said, 'He trusted in God that he would deliver him, let him deliver him now if he will have him.' And his disciples are not to expect better usage. 'Therefore,' saith one of them, 'we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God.' 1 Tim. iv. 10. To silence these reproaches, we beseech God to manifest his mercy in our salvation. The resurrection of Jesus was an 'answer' to his blasphemers; and the mouth of all wickedness will be stopped at the last day.

*43. And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.*

In the meantime, while affliction presseth hard upon us, while our deliverance is deferred, and the enemy is suffered to reproach and blaspheme, our prayer must be, that God would give us courage and utterance, still to confess him before men, and boldly to speak his 'word of truth,' for the edification of some, and the confutation of others; as knowing that our faith is not vain, nor shall we be disappointed of our 'hope,' since both are built upon the 'judgments,' or revealed decrees, of him who can neither err nor deceive.

*44. So shall I keep thy law continually, for ever and ever.*

By means of strength and power from above, we shall be enabled to serve God, in adversity as well

in prosperity : and amidst all difficulties and dangers, into which the path of duty may lead us, purity will persevere in it, till, arriving at the gate of heaven, and there taking leave of her companions and fellow-travellers, faith and hope, she shall enter those blissful regions, to perform to eternity the perfect will of God, which the infirmities of human nature prevented her from having so fully reformed here below.

*45. And I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts.*

No external pressure can take away that spiritual liberty, which the faithful Christian experienceth when he hath made an open confession of the truth, and determined at all events to do his duty. When he is no longer straitened by fear, but set at ease by love. 'The truth maketh him free, and he walketh in the liberty of the children of God,' that liberty which they only obtain 'who seek his precepts,' and, by the performance of them, are rescued from the bondage both of tyrannical desires and slavish fears.

*46. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.*

A prophet may be called 'before kings,' either in the course of his office, to instruct them, or else in a judiciary way, to give an account of his faith. In either case, if he 'walketh at liberty, he will speak of God's testimonies,' with due reverence to the person and authority of his prince, but as one who is neither afraid nor 'ashamed' to declare the holy counsel of heaven to any being upon earth.

*47. And I will delight myself in thy command-*

*ments, which I have loved. 48. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved: and I will meditate in thy statutes.*

He who would preach boldly to others, must himself 'delight' in the practice of what he preacheth. If there be in us a new nature, it will 'love the commandments of God,' as being congenial to it: on that which we love, we shall continually be 'meditating;' and our meditation will end in action; we shall 'lift up the hands, which hang down,' Heb. xii. 12, that they may 'work the works of God, while it is day; because the night cometh, when no man can work.' John ix. 4.

#### ZAIN.—PART VII.

*49. Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*

God promiseth salvation before he giveth it, excite our desire of it, to exercise our faith, prove our sincerity, to perfect our patience. These purposes he seemeth to have sometimes gotten his word, and to have deserted those whom he had engaged to succour and relieve; in case he would have us, as it were, to remind of his promise, and solicit his performance. The Psalmist here instructeth us to prefer citation upon these grounds; first, that God prove false to his own word; 'Remember thou unto thy servant;' secondly, that he will disappoint an expectation which himself raised; 'upon which thou hast caused hope.'

50. *This is my comfort in my affliction : for thy  
rd hath quickened me.*

While performance is delayed, we 'rejoice in  
æ;' Rom. xii. 12; and the promise is our 'com-  
t in affliction;' a comfort, divine, strong, last-  
; a comfort, that will not, like all others, fail us  
en we most want it, in the day of sickness, and  
the hour of death; but will always keep pace  
th our necessities, increasing in proportion as  
pleasures of the world and the flesh decrease  
us, and then becoming complete, when they are  
more. So powerful is the word of God to revive  
when dead, either in sins or in sorrow: 'thy  
rd hath quickened me.'

51. *The proud have had me greatly in derision :  
; have I not declined from thy law.*

A true servant of God believeth the promises, and  
ctiseth the precepts of his blessed Master. The  
ughty infidel will scoff at him for one part of his  
duct; the insolent worldling will ridicule him  
the other; but neither will induce him to dis-  
iève, or to disobey. Let us be certain that we  
ve the divine 'law' for our warrant in what we  
lieve, and in what we do; and then, let not the  
erision of the proud' prevail upon us to 'de-  
ne from it.'

52. *I remembered thy judgments of old, O Lord ;  
& have comforted myself.*

The great remedy against that temptation which  
beth from the reproaches of our scornful and in-  
lting adversaries, is here prescribed, namely, a  
remembrance of God's judgments of old,' whether  
understand the 'judgments' of his mouth, or  
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those of his hand ; his righteous decrees punishment of bad, and reward of good men many and wonderful instances of his execution of those decrees, from the beginning of the world recorded in the sacred history. These are so real and endless 'comfort' upon such occasions because nothing can happen to us which has happened to God's people 'of old;' nor which there is not a precedent in Scripture, we may read the process of similar trials, their and the final sentence of the judge, who is the same, and whose rule of procedure and determination is invariable.

*53. Horror hath taken hold upon me, because the wicked that forsake thy law.*

The consequence of a due meditation on judgments, will be a compassion for the 'wicked' on whom those judgments, in the end, fall; instead of feeling for ourselves, on account of injuries they do us, we shall feel for them, and thereby drawing down vengeance and destruction on their own heads. 'Daughters of Jerusalem said the blessed Jesus, when led to be crucified, 'weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.' Luke, xxiii. 28.

*54. Thy statutes have been my songs in the wilderness of my pilgrimage.*

The soul, which descended from above, and is to return thither again, is a stranger and sojourner upon earth. The body is 'the house of her pilgrimage,' in which she is confined during her earthly exile. And, how harsh soever the usage and afflictions which she receiveth from the world, she ever finds

and comfort, as once did the fugitive and wandering son of Jesse, in making God's 'statutes' the acts of her psalms, and hymns, and spiritual gifts, until death shall restore her to liberty. In ascending to heaven from whence she came, like the early lark, singing as she ascends, she seek her native abode, there to celebrate her redemption from the earth, and to chant forth the praises of Him who hath redeemed her, in a new world, before the throne.

*. I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy law.*

For the 'name' of God, his nature, so much at the heart of it as we are concerned to know, and are capable of receiving, is revealed to us. Such a love for the Psalmist for it on that account, that, as one day God's statutes were his songs, in the night God's name was the subject of his meditation. In his tongue he praised him in the day, with his heart he desired him in the night watches. At the dissipation, noise, and hurry of business; external silence produceth internal calmness and composure, inviting us to celestial contemplation; the world is dead to us, and we are dead to the world; the soul is then most alive, and seemeth to experience a foretaste of that time when the body and its concerns shall no more molest and impede.

The good effect of hours thus secretly passed in holy exercises, will appear openly in our lives and conversations: 'I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night, and,' as the fruit of it, 'have kept thy law.'

3. *This I had, because I kept thy commandments.*

As one sin is often the consequence and the punishment of another, so one act of obedience is the issue and the reward of another; and to him who hath well used the grace already received, shall more be given. 'This I had,' this ability to perform my duty, and to delight in the performance of it day and night, was vouchsafed unto me 'because I kept thy commandments,' because I was not heretofore disobedient, but employed the strength with which thou, O Lord, hast endued me, not in doing mine own will, but thine.

#### CHETH.—PART VIII.

57. Thou art *my portion*, O Lord: *I have said that I would keep thy words.*

Happy the man, who can sincerely say, 'Thou art my portion, O Lord;' I have considered, and made my choice; from henceforth, I renounce all things for the love of thee; thou art sufficient to me; thee only I desire to enjoy, and, therefore thee only I desire to please; 'I have said that I would keep thy words.'

58. *I entreated thy favour with my whole heart, be merciful unto me, according to thy word.*

He who hath chosen God for 'his portion,' earnestly seek his 'favour,' and the light of countenance; he who hath promised and vowed 'keep the words' of God, hath need to see 'favour and that light, that he may have grace and power to fulfil his engagements. Mercy is the fountain of every good gift for which we as God's promise the only ground upon which it: 'be merciful unto me, according to th'

*59. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.*

The Psalmist did not content himself with barely praying for strength and grace, but his faith, relying on the word of promise, put itself in motion. He considered his 'ways,' his course of thinking, speaking, and acting; how far he had proceeded in it, and whither it led him; and this consideration produced a conversion of the whole man, of the heart and its affections, from the creature to the Creator, as he hath revealed himself in the Scriptures of truth: 'I turned my feet unto thy testimonies.'

*60. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.*

A true penitent suffereth no time to be lost between his good resolutions and the performance of them. 'Draw me,' saith the church, 'and we will run after thee.' Cant. i. 4. Andrew, Peter, and others, stayed not for a second call from Christ, but allowed him immediately upon the first. By deferring our return to duty, we lose many comfortable fruits, which it would have produced both in ourselves and others, while the difficulties of ever returning, and the danger of never returning, are daily and hourly increasing.

*61. The bands, or, troops, of the ungodly have robbed me; but I have not forgotten thy law.*

To be robbed or plundered of his possessions in this world was by no means a case peculiar to David. The primitive Christians were continually so treated; and our Lord gives all his disciples warning to stand prepared for such events, ready



in disposition, in heart and mind, to quit all they who first followed him literally did. The apostle tells us of some, who not only bore patiently, but even 'took joyfully, the spoiling of their goods:' the reason he assigns for so extraordinary a behaviour deserves to be noted and remembered; 'knowing that they had in heaven better and an enduring substance.' Heb. x. They who part with earth to gain heaven, and change the world for its Maker, certainly nothing by the bargain. Nay, there will come an hour, when, for that foretaste of glory which good conscience affordeth to its happy possessor, the dearest lover of mammon would joyfully give up all the gold of Peru, and all the diamond Indostan.

62. *At midnight I will rise to give thanks to thee, because of thy righteous judgments.*

So far were temporal losses from causing the Psalmist to forsake God, that he sought him more earnestly and fervently on that account, rising 'at midnight to give thanks' for all 'righteous judgments' and dispensations towards his servants. Thus Paul and Silas not only impoverished, but imprisoned, for the testimony of Jesus, yet in that situation, with their feet fast to the stocks, sang 'praises at midnight,' thus turning their night into day, and their prison a paradise; when, lo, their hallelujahs ascended to heaven, and God arose to judgment; the earth trembled, the doors were opened, the chains were cast off, the gaoler and his family were converted, the apostles set at liberty. And although there be no obligation upon men to 'rise at midnight

in order to 'give thanks;' yet, if they who awake at that, or any other time, would accustom their hearts, at least, to so divine an exercise, they would find it always productive of the most comfortable effects.

63. *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.*

As no sufferings should make us neglect our intercourse with God, so neither should they tempt us to forsake the communion of saints, or fellowship of them who 'fear God, and work righteousness.' These are knit together in love, as members of the same mystical body, insomuch that 'if one member suffer, or be honoured, all the members should suffer, or be honoured with it;' these we should own at all times, in prosperity and in adversity; with these should our acquaintance and conversation be, for the mutual improvement and consolation of them and of ourselves. Of such was David a 'companion,' and such the Redeemer himself 'is not ashamed to call brethren.' Heb. ii. 11.

64. *The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes.*

Heaven and earth, and all that are therein, declare, from day to day, the 'mercy' of their Creator and Preserver, which is 'over all his works. And his goodness thus displayed through the outward and visible world, forbids us to doubt of his loving kindness towards those immortal spirits, which, in tenements of mortal clay, make, for a while, their abode here below; during which short period, they beseech him earnestly to grant them

such a portion of that saving knowledge, which is his gift, as may secure to them, when they shall depart hence, a place in a happier country, and a more enduring city. 'Teach me thy statutes!'

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TETH.—PART IX

65. *Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word.*

As the sense of our wants should prepare the mind for prayer, so gratitude for blessings received should tune the heart to praise. In preferring our petitions, self-love may sometimes have a share; but thankfulness is the offspring of an ingenuous spirit, and the love of God. Let a man carefully recount the divine mercies shown to him from his birth, considering withal how unworthy he hath been of the least of those mercies, as also how far preferable his state is to that of many others, and he will find reason 'in all things to give thanks,' to acknowledge, with David, the goodness and truth of Jehovah, and to say, 'Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word.'

66. *Teach me good judgment and knowledge; for I have believed thy commandments.*

From thanksgiving, the Psalmist returneth again to prayer, as, while we continue in this world, we must all do. The gift for which he now prayeth, is that of 'a good judgment with knowledge;' as the former must enable us to make a proper use of the latter. The word דעת, which is here translated 'judgment,' signifies bodily 'taste,' and that

faculty in the mind which answers to it, the faculty of discerning, distinguishing, and judging rightly of things moral and spiritual, as the palate doth of meats, their different flavours and qualities. Without this taste or discretion, we mistake falsehood for truth in our studies, and wrong for right in our practice; superstition and enthusiasm may pass with us for religion, or else licentiousness may intrude itself upon us, under the name and notion of liberty: in a word, our learning and knowledge prove useless, if not prejudicial, to us. A sound mind therefore should, above all things, be desired of God in our prayers; and those prayers will be heard, when we can sincerely profess a readiness to be directed by God's laws, through faith in their author, his promises and threatenings; on which ground David urgeth his request; 'for I have believed thy commandments.'

*67. Before I was afflicted, I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.*

We collect from this verse, that prosperity is too often the parent of sin; that adversity is, first, its punishment, then, its remedy; and that every considerate man, who hath been afflicted, will thankfully acknowledge as much. "When afflictions fail to have their due effect, the case is desperate. They are the last remedy which indulgent Providence uses; and if they fail, we must languish and die in misery and contempt. Vain men! how seldom do we know what to wish or to pray for! When we pray against misfortunes, and when we fear them most, we want them most. The shortest and the best prayer which we can address to Him who knows our wants, and our ignorance in asking, is

this—Thy will be done." Lord Bolingbroke's flexions on Exile, p. 276.

68. *Thou art good, and doest good : teach me statutes.*

In other words, as Bishop Patrick hath well nected and paraphrased it, "Thou art in thine nature kind and good; and nothing else can proceed from thee, who designest our good, even thou afflictest us; take what methods thou ple with me, only teach me effectually to do as wouldst have me."

69. *The proud have forged a lie against me : I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.*

Every disciple of Christ, who, like his Master, goeth contrary to the ways of the world, and demneth them, must expect to be, like that Master, slandered and calumniated by the world. To slanders and calumnies, a good life is the best answer. When a friend once told Plato, what scandalous stories his enemies had propagated concerning him, 'I will live so,' replied that great philosopher, 'that nobody shall believe them.'

70. *Their heart is as fat as grease ; but I do in thy law.*

'The fatness of the heart' implieth, in this passage, two things in those of whom it is affirmed; first, and its consequence, insensibility to those spiritual and divine truths, which are not only the substance but the 'delight,' of temperate and holy persons who gladly fly from large companies, full of costly meats, and rich wines, to enjoy in private more exalted pleasures of abstinence, meditation and prayer.

71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted :  
that I might learn thy statutes.*

God's statutes are best learned in the school of affliction, because by affliction the great impediments to our learning them are removed ; pride is subdued, and concupiscence is extinguished. ' He that hath suffered in the flesh,' saith an apostle, ' hath ceased from sin ;' 1 Pet. iv. 1 ; and in an immunity from sin consisteth one of the greatest felicities of heaven, which thus descends into the afflicted soul, so as to render even the state of sickness itself, in some sort, desirable. Strange as this proposition may appear, the reader will find its truth demonstrated, by the inimitable bishop Jeremy Taylor, in that truly golden tract, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying*, chap. iii. sect. 6, on *The Advantages of Sickness*.

72. *The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.*

Affliction taketh from us the inclination to offend, and it giveth us, in return, a knowledge of that law which ' is better,' and which, when we are thoroughly acquainted with it, we shall esteem to be better, ' than thousands of gold and silver ;' better in its nature, for it is from heaven, they are from the earth ; better in its use, for it bringeth salvation to our souls, whereas they can only procure sustenance for the body ; better in point of duration, for the benefits of one are certain and eternal, the advantages of the others temporal and uncertain. Blessed are they who seek in the Scriptures the true riches ; who traffic for the spiritual gains of celestial wisdom ; for surely ' the mer-

chandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.' Prov. iii. 14.

*Twenty-fifth Day.—Evening Prayer.*

JOD.—PART X.

*73. Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.*

The formation of man was the last and noblest work of God, and it is a standing miracle of divine wisdom and power. The consideration that God made us, is here urged as an argument why he should not forsake and reject us, since every artist hath a value for his own work, proportioned to its excellence. It is, at the same time, an acknowledgment of the service we owe him, founded on the relation which a creature beareth to his Creator. And the petition implieth in it a confession of our present inability to know his will without his revelation, and to do it without his grace.

*74. They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.*

They who 'fear God' are naturally 'glad when they see' and converse with one like themselves; but more especially so, when it is one whose faith and patience have carried him through troubles, and rendered him victorious over temptations; one who hath 'hoped in God's word,' and hath not been disappointed. Every such instance affordeth fresh encouragement to all those who, in the course of their warfare, are to undergo like troubles, and

to encounter like temptations. In all our trials, let us therefore remember that our brethren, as well as ourselves, are deeply interested in the event, which may either strengthen or weaken the hands of multitudes.

*75. I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.*

This humble, pious, and dutiful confession will be made by every true child of God, when under the correction of his heavenly Father. From whatever quarter afflictions come upon us, they are 'the judgments of God,' without whose providence nothing befallerh us. His judgments are always right or just,' duly proportioned to the disease and strength of the patient; in sending them, God is 'faithful' and true to his word, wherein he hath never promised the crown without the cross, but hath, on the contrary, assured us, that one will be necessary in order to our obtaining the other; and that they who are beloved by him shall not sin with impunity, nor go astray without a call to return. All this we ought to 'know,' or to be assured of beyond doubt, as we may be from the many declarations in Scripture, from our own experience, and from that of others.

*76. Let, I pray thee, thy mercy and kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.*

In the former verse the criminal, finding that the hand of God was upon him, had owned the justice and the faithfulness of his judge in the punishment inflicted. Judgment having thus had her perfect work, the offender, now humbled and penitent,



maketh application to the throne of grace, sueth for that mercy which God, by his 'v hath promised to his servants, who are chast not for their destruction, but for their salva When God's ' judgments' have brought us t acknowledgment of our sins, his ' merciful ness' will speedily be our ' comfort.'

*77. Let thy tender mercies come unto me, t may live : for thy law is my delight.*

The mercies of God are ' tender mercies,' are the mercies of a father to his children, tender as the compassion of a mother over the of her womb. They ' come unto' us when w not able to go to them. By them alone we ' the life of faith, of love, of joy and gladness. to such as ' delight' in his law, God will { these mercies, and this life ; he will give them don, and, by so doing, he will give them life the dead.

*78. Let the proud be ashamed, for they dealt versely with me without a cause ; but I will me in thy precepts.*

This complaint of the Psalmist hath been : by the faithful in all ages, that the men o world ' dealt perversely with them without a c or oppressed them falsely, first spreading sla and calumnies concerning them, and then j cutting them for those supposed crimes. Such should have no other effect upon us than i upon David. He prayed that ' shame' and c pointment might teach humility to the ' p and applied himself still more and more to t ate in the ' precepts' of his God.

*. Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and that have known thy testimonies.*

avid beseecheth God, if any good men had alienated from him, either through fear, prece, or offence, that they might return to him, and acknowledge him. To thee, O thou Son David and King of the spiritual Israel, let those ng thy people, who, through any temptation, : fallen from their allegiance, return and be ect.

*. Let my heart be sound in thy statutes ; that I ot ashamed.*

his is a prayer necessary for all men to use at imes, but more particularly in seasons of per-tion and temptation. By 'soundness of heart' eant solidity and steadfastness in grace and ae, as opposed to the mere form of godliness or show of the hypocrite, which conceal the rot-ness and corruption lurking within; and also to sudden and vanishing goodness of the tempo-convert, which quickly disappears like the ning dew, and withers like the seed sown on a . When internal holiness accompanies and ates that which is external, when the word is oughly rooted, and faith hath acquired the so-ignity over our desires, then our ' hearts' are und in God's statutes,' and there is hope that, he day of trial, we shall not give our brethren e to be ashamed of us, nor be ourselves bamed' before God.

## CAPH.—PART XI.

81. *My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but hope in thy word, or, I have expected thy word.*

Thus have the true servants of God, in every age expressed their ardent desire of his salvation. They did the patriarchs, the prophets, the kings, and the faithful people, formerly wish to behold the advent of their Saviour in the flesh; until Simeon, taking him in his arms, spoke what they would all have spoken had they been present, 'Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' But the Bridegroom was soon taken away, and the heavens have received him, until the restitution of all things; for which the church upon earth at all day waiteth and prayeth; that she may be delivered from all her troubles, and inseparably united to him in whom she delighteth. Every individual when oppressed by sin and sorrow, may make supplication in the same words, for that salvation which is by grace, through faith.

82. *Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?*

While the promised salvation is delayed, the afflicted soul thinketh every day a year, and looketh toward heaven for the accomplishment of God's word, saying to 'her Friend and her Beloved' 'When wilt thou comfort me? Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!'

<sup>1</sup> "Defecerunt oculi mei." Ambrosius: "Nonne quendam aliquem desideramus et speramus adfore, eò dirigimus oculos unde speramus esse venturum? Sic teneræ uxor ætatis, de qua"

3. *For I am become like a bottle in the smoke : do I not forget thy statutes.*

Bottles' among the Jews were made of skins, & of these, if exposed to heat and 'smoke,' would become shrivelled and useless. Such a change will labour and sorrow cause in the human frame ; and the Psalmist here complaineth, that beauty and his strength were gone ; the natural vigour was dried up ; in consequence of which, the skin shrivelled, and both colour and vigour departed from him. Disease and old age will produce the same sad effects in us all ; but the body's weakness is the soul's strength ; as the outward man decayeth, the inward man is renewed : ' I do not forget thy statutes.'

84. *How many are the days of thy servant ? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me ?*

The well-beloved John heard a question, of the same import with this, asked by the spirits of the martyrs, that had left their bodies, and were waiting, in the separate state, for the day of retribution. The answer which was made to them, may likewise satisfy our impatience, when suffering affliction and persecution : ' I saw under the altar the souls

in literali indefessâ expectatione conjugis præstolatur adventum : ut quancunque navim viderit, illic putat conjugem navis esse, metuatque ne videndi gratiâ dilecti, alius antevertat, nec possit prima dicere, Video te, mi marite." Vide reliqua apud Ambrosium, ejusdem planè spiritûs, nec tamen potui temerè, quin hæc exscriberem. Sic affectus est quisquis cum Christo dissolvi cupit, et esse cum Christo. Sic denique qui gustato bono Dei verbo, ut idem Paulus ait, sibi postea deficit tædio sui, ac reddi sibi postulat prægustatam varissimam amoris dulcedinem.—Bossuet.

of them that were slain for the word of God, for the testimony which they held. And they came with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, and true, dost thou not judge and avenge blood on them that dwell on the earth? And robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet a little season, until their fellow-servants also, their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.' Rev. vi. 9, &c.

85. *The proud have digged pits for me, where I am not after thy law.*

The manner of taking wild beasts was by 'digging pits,' and covering them over with stones upon which when the beast trod, he fell into the pit, and was there confined and taken. But there was a 'law,' that if a pit were left open, and a beast, an ox, or an ass, fell into it, the owner of the pit should make good the damage: Exod. 21. 33. Much more shall men be called to account, who purposely lay snares and stumbling blocks before the feet of their innocent brethren to cause them to fall and perish.

86. *All thy commandments are faithful: they have secured me wrongfully; help thou me.*

Man is perfidious and deceitful, God is 'true' and true; he hath promised to 'help' those who suffer 'wrongfully,' and he will, in due season, show himself to be the avenger of all such. Let them wait with patience, since the King of righteousness himself suffered as a malefactor, before he entered into his glory.

*thy had almost consumed me upon earth ;  
 took not thy precepts.*

How low the church, or any member thereof, persecution and tribulation, be brought down, yet nothing can separate them from God, while they 'forsake not his precepts,' disbelieve his promises. The soul, we must forsake the body ; but God will for ever.

*Remember me after thy loving-kindness, so shall  
 I testify of thy mouth.*

By the 'loving-kindness' of God our Father, the Spirit of life is given unto us, by whose 'gracious' influences we are revived, when sunk down in sorrows, and are enabled with joyfulness, to persevere in keeping the testimonies 'of thy mouth.'

#### LAMENT.—PART XII.

*Ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven ;  
 thou art for ever, O Lord, thy word is  
 heaven. 90. Thy faithfulness is unto all  
 generations : thou hast established the earth, and it  
 shall continue this day according to  
 thy word : for all are thy servants.*

The immutability of Jehovah, and the immutability of his counsels, are considerations which afford encouragement to his people, when enemies are in arms against them. Even in the unwearied 'heavens' continue to perform their operations upon them ; the bodies placed in them ; while the

globe of the 'earth,' retaining its original form coherence of parts, still, as at the beginning, ports and maintains the successive 'generation men, which live and move upon it, to whom faithful promises of God are fulfilled from age. Thus doth the unchangeable order of itself point out to us the truth of her great A and at the same time reprove the eccentric m of rebellious man. The heavens and the continue this day according to thine 'ordin O Lord, 'for all things are thy servants invariably serve thee, except man, who alone endowed with reason that he might obey and rify thee in this life, and that which is to con

92. *Unless thy law had been my delights, I then have perished in mine affliction.*

The Psalmist assureth us, from his own rience, how pleasant and how profitable, in of trouble, is the meditation on the fidelity of as displayed in the stability of his works. 'Th lights,' by this afforded, sustained his soul in 'tions,' which must otherwise have brought to an end. And the same everlasting word st the believer's support and consolation, even the heavens shall melt around him with f heat, and the earth, and all that is therein be burnt up. 'Heaven and earth shall pass saith he who made them, 'but my word shall pass away.'

93. *I will never forget thy precepts: for them thou hast quickened me.*

Great are the necessities, and many the disorders of the soul; but in the Scripture there is pro

medicine for them all; and according to our various wants and maladies, God relieveth and quickeneth us, sometimes with one part of his law, sometimes with another. Now, when we have found ourselves thus benefited, at any time, by a particular passage of holy writ, we should never forget, but remember and treasure it up in our minds, against a like occasion, when the same affliction and temptation may again befall us.

1. *I am thine; save me, for I have sought thy precepts.*

THE double relation which we have the honour to bear to God by creation and by redemption, the work of his hands, and the purchase of his blood, is a most endearing and prevailing argument with him, to 'save' us from our enemies. Let it then be remembered, that no man can come to God with a good conscience, 'I am thine,' unless he can also go on, and say, 'I have sought thy precepts,' 'I desire to serve and obey thee alone; yea, after all, 'his servants we are to whom we belong;' and if sin be our master, how can we say 'I am thy master, whose interest is directly opposite, 'I am thine?'

5. *The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: I will consider thy testimonies.*

IN the preceding verse, David besought God to 'redeem' him. The reason of that prayer is here assigned, namely, because 'the wicked lay in wait for me to destroy me,' as they afterwards did to destroy one whom the afflicted and persecuted saint represented. Spiritual enemies are continually upon the watch to destroy us all; and we



can no way escape their wiles, but by 'coming,' so as to understand and observe, God's monies.'

96. *I have seen an end of all perfection : commandment is exceeding broad.*

Of 'all perfection' in this world, whether beauty, wit, learning, pleasure, honour, or experience will soon show us the 'end.' But is the end or boundary of the word of God can ascend to the height of its excellency ; fathom the depth of its mysteries ; who can out the comprehension of its precepts, or the extent of its promises ; who can take dimensions of that love of God to man which describeth, or that love of man to God which teacheth ! The knowledge of one thing leads forward to that of another, and still, as we go on, the prospect opens before us into eternal the pleasant and fruitful mountains of Zion rising on the other side of Jordan, when viewed from the top of Pisgah. O happy celestial wisdom, permanent felicity, true and unfading glory ! while we contemplate how doth the world lessen, and shrink to nothing in our eyes ! Thy blessings faith now begets but it is charity which shall hereafter possess and enjoy them.

#### MEM.—PART XIII.

97. *O how I love thy law ! It is my meditation all the day.*

Words cannot express the love which the mind entertaineth for the Scriptures. They

istle of God to mankind, offering reconciliation, ace, and union with himself in glory ; containing sons why we should love him and each other, h directions how to show forth that love, which, the apostle saith, is 'the fulfilling of the law.' m. xiii. 10. On some portions of these Scrip- es should our 'meditation' be continually, and ch day' should add something to our knowledge, ur faith, to our virtue.

18. *Thou through thy commandments hast made wiser than mine enemies : for they are ever with*

99. *I have more understanding than all my chers : for thy testimonies are my meditation.*

1. *I understand more than the ancients : because eep thy precepts.*

The 'commandments' of God were 'ever with' vid ; the 'testimonies' of God were his 'medita- n ;' and the 'precepts' of God it was his care to bserve ; therefore his wisdom exceeded the policy his 'enemies,' the learning of his 'teachers,' and e experience of the 'ancients.' Thus, by the dom of the Scriptures, did the holy Jesus, in e days of his flesh, confound his adversaries, onish the teachers of the law, and instruct the ed. And it is the high prerogative of the Scrip- res, at all times, to render youth and simplicity prior to the inveterate malice and subtilty of the and deceiver and his associates.

101. *I have refrained my feet from every evil way, at I might keep thy word.*

The foundation of all religion must be laid in ortification and self-denial ; for since the will of llen men is contrary to the will of God, we must

abstain from doing the one in order to do the other. The affections may be styled the 'feet' of the soul, and unless these be 'refrained from evil works,' no progress can be made in that way which is good and right; we cannot 'keep God's word' if we do not 'keep his commandments.'

102. *I have not departed from thy judgments, thou hast taught me.*

Perseverance is the effect of instruction. Above, by the Spirit, through the word: the heavenly Teacher differeth from all others in that, with the lesson, he bestoweth on the learner both a disposition to learn and an ability to joy in the truth.

103. *How sweet are thy words unto my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.*

The soul hath its 'taste,' as well as the body. That taste is then in good order, when the words of Scripture are 'sweet' to the soul, as 'honey' to the mouth. If they are not always so, it is because our taste is vitiated by the world and the flesh, and we shall ever find our relish for the word of God to be greatest, when that for the world and the flesh is least, in time of affliction, sickness, or death; for these are contrary one to the other. In heaven the latter will be no more, and there the former will be all in all.

104. *Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.*

He who delighteth to study the Scriptures, 'understandeth' from them the true nature of holiness and of sin; he who doth understand the nature of each, will love the former; and, in proportion, 'hate' the latter: and with that word

oughly hate, we will not bear to have any communion; with suspicion and jealousy we shall eye approaching; with courage and constancy we shall arm and fight against it; we shall make no truce, nor so much as a truce with it; but, as faithful soldiers and servants of Jesus Christ, we shall at that utter extermination of it, which we have expected, and which, through the Spirit of grace and truth, will be accomplished, but not, perhaps, till our life and warfare shall end together.

*Twenty-sixth Day.—Morning Prayer.*

#### NUN.—PART XIV.

5. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light my path.*

Man is a traveller, his life is a journey, heaven is his end, his road lies through a wilderness, and he is in the dark. Thus circumstanced, how earnestly he devoutly ought he to pray, 'O send out thy truth; and thy truth; let them lead me, let them guide me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles!' Psalm xxiii. 3. For surely 'the commandment is truth, and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.' Prov. vi. 23. The Word of God discovereth to us our errors; it shows us where we lost our way, and how we may recover it again. If we take this 'lamp' in our hand, it will not only point out our course in general, but also direct us in every step, and guide our 'feet' aright in the 'path' of holiness and peace. Thus, through the devious and lonely wilds of this world, was Israel once conducted to the land of

promise, by the illuminating pillar, or rather by Him whose presence dwelt in the midst of it.

106. *I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.*

Such being the direction afforded by the word of God to a benighted pilgrim, David had obliged himself, in the most solemn manner, to follow that direction. Every Christian doth, at his baptism, in like manner, "promise and vow to keep God's commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of his life." The nature and extent of these engagements must be interpreted according to the covenant of grace, under which they are made. The command to us sinners is, that we should repent, and believe in him, who will pardon our failings, and strengthen our infirmities, that we may walk as becometh his disciples, who, though they ought not to commit sin, may yet, by divine grace, be restored and saved from it. 'These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.' 1 John, ii. 1.

107. *I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word.*

The faithful servants of God may be 'afflicted;' they may be 'very much' and grievously afflicted: but let them consider, that by afflictions, their corruptions are purged away, their faith is tried, their patience perfected, their brethren are edified, and their Master is glorified. Let them still firmly rely on the divine promise of grace and salvation; still humbly pray for its accomplishment in themselves: 'Quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word.'

108. *Accept, I beseech thee, the free-will offerings of my mouth, O Lord; and teach me thy judgments.*

The 'offerings' of the believer are prayer, praise, and holy resolutions and vows, like that of the Psalmist above, 'to keep God's righteous judgments,' in which he therefore petitioneth to be every day more and more 'taught' and instructed by the Spirit of truth. Christians are called by St. Peter 'a royal and holy priesthood, appointed to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ.' 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9.

109. *My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.*

To have one's 'soul,' נַפְשׁוֹ, or life, 'in one's hand,' is a phrase often used in Scripture, and implieth going in continual danger of one's life: see Judg. xii. 3; 1 Sam. xix. 5; and xxviii. 21; Job, xiii. 14. Great and incessant as David's perils were, he did not 'forget' God's promises, nor his precepts, but trusted in the former, and performed the latter. St. Paul knew that 'in every city bonds and afflictions awaited him: but none of these things,' saith he, 'move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.' Acts, xx. 23.

110. *The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.*

When open violence fails to move a man from his steadfastness, 'the wicked will lay snares' for him, to entice him into sin, by the baits of honour, pleasure, or profit; by exposing him to unavoidable temptations, as, when David was driven out of his own land, to live among idolaters, of which usage

he complaineth, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19; or else, by making laws which an honest man cannot obey without sin, or refuse to obey without danger. Numbers are the traps of one kind or other, which human and diabolical malice, in conjunction, have set for the consciences of those who profess themselves to be the servants of God; and happy is that servant whom they have not caused to 'err from the precepts' of his Master.

111. *Thy testimonies have I taken as mine heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.*

The 'testimonies' of God's will, his word, and his sacraments, are the bonds and the deeds by which we hold our heavenly 'inheritance, as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.' Of these deeds, at this inheritance, no power can deprive us; and when 'they are the rejoicing of our hearts,' shall not, by preferring an earthly inheritance, deprive ourselves of them.

112. *I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end.*

The 'inclination of the heart' to good is the will of God; but man is, nevertheless, in this as in other instances, said to perform it, when he listens to its call, and obeys the motions of his grace. We are not to judge of ourselves by what we sometimes say and do, but by the general disposition and tendency of the heart and its affections. When, after repeated trials, we find that the love of God is the scale against the love of the world; when it is our glory, our delight, our treasure, our meat and drink to do his will, and, against all opposition, to persevere in doing it, 'even unto the end;' then

re we the true disciples of that Master whose heart was evermore inclined to do good ; who alone performed a perfect and spotless obedience, and persisted in working the work of him that sent him, until, with his last breath, he declared upon the cross, ' It is finished.'

## SAMECH.—PART XV.

113. *I hate vain thoughts : but thy law do I love.*

' Love and hatred' are the two great and influencing affections of the human mind. Since the all, they have been misplaced. By nature we love vain thoughts,' and ' hate the law of God. The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' Rom. viii. 7. But in a renewed mind the case is altered ; its delight is in the law of God, and therefore it cannot bear ' vain thoughts,' which are contrary to that law, and exalt themselves against it. Thoughts are often said to be free ; from human censure they are, but not from the cognisance and judgment of the Omniscient. The mind should be well furnished with proper materials, on which to employ itself. We shall then be secured against the incursions of rambling, conceited, worldly, impure, and revengeful thoughts, which otherwise will devour half our time, and appear against us, to our unspeakable amazement, in that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed.

114. *Thou art my hiding-place, and my shield : I hope in thy word.*

From vain thoughts and vain persons, the



Psalmist teacheth us to fly, by prayer, to God, our refuge and protector. This course a belier will as naturally take, in the hour of temptation and danger, as the offspring of the hen, on perceiving a bird of prey hovering over their heads, retires to their 'hiding-place,' under the wings of the dam; or as the warrior opposeth his 'shield' to the darts which are aimed at him.

115. *Depart from me, ye evil-doers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.*

Safe under the protection of the Almighty, David bids the wicked 'depart from him;' he neither fears their malice, nor will follow their counsel, being resolutely determined to adhere to his duty and to 'keep the commandments of his God.' If he who hath formed David's resolution, must, like him, disclaim and renounce the society of 'evil-doers;' for every man will insensibly contract the good or bad qualities of the company which he keeps; and should, therefore, be careful to keep such as will make him wiser and better, and fit him for the goodly fellowship of saints and angels.

116. *Uphold me according to thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope. 117. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.*

A resolution to fly from evil, and to do good, is properly followed by an earnest and repeated prayer to be 'upheld' in the performance of it by divine grace, 'according to God's word,' and promise, that so our 'hope' in that word may not fail, and not put us to 'shame' before our enemies; that we may be 'saved' from falling, and enabled, in our walk-

have 'respect unto the divine statutes contrary.' How necessary is this prayer to be made of those whose tempers and dispositions are contrary; who have so many and so formidable adversaries to contend with, and on whom temporal condition hath so much influence!

*Thou hast trodden down all them that err by statutes: for their deceit is falsehood.*

dreadful judgments which God, from time to time, in all ages of the world, hath executed, which he still can and will execute, upon impenitent sinners, afford a kind of admonition, and a powerful motive to obedience. As no force can detract the power of God, so no 'cunning' can evade his wisdom, but will always, in the end, inevitably 'deceive' those who trust in it, and embroil against the counsels of heaven; 'their deceit is subtilty, is falsehood,' שקר, it will fail, and its owners. Of this, history furnisheth instances in abundance. And it will be evident to the whole world, when simplicity and innocence shall triumph with the Lamb, on Mount Sion; deceit and guile shall have their portion with the reprobate, in the lake of fire.

*Thou puttest away all the ungodly of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies.*

Ungodly men and hypocrites are mingled with the sons and servants of God, as 'dross' is mixed with the pure metal, and appeareth to be of it. But the fiery trial of divine judgment discovereth the difference. The false pretences of the hypocrite are detected, and the glory of the wicked vanisheth away. These dispensa-

tions of God's providence increase our 'love his 'word;' because they give us sensible experience of its truth, they show us the justice of in punishing others, together with his mercy sparing us, and removing those who might corrupted us and turned the silver itself into dross. In times of visitation, Christ sitteth among people 'as a refiner and purifier of silver,' purging away all dross, that out of what remains may be made 'vessels of honour, meet for the Master's use,' to serve and to adorn the sanctuary. Mal. iii. 3; Isa. i. 25; 2 Tim. ii. 21.

120. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.*

At the presence of Jehovah, when he appears in judgment, the earth trembleth and is still. His best servants are not exempted from an awe and dread upon such occasions; scenes of this kind shown in vision to the prophets, caused their flesh to quiver, and all their bones to shake. Men are so passed with a frail body, and a sinful world, that they stand in need of every possible tie; and the affections both of fear and love must be employed to restrain us from transgression; we must, at the same time, 'love God's testimonies, and fear his judgments.'

#### AIN.—PART XVI.

121. *I have done judgment and justice: I have not to mine oppressors.*

He who is engaged in a righteous cause, and hath acted uprightly in the support of it, may go far, without incurring the censure of boasting,

rusting to his own righteousness, make David's plea, 'I have done judgment and justice;' as if he had said, Thou, O my God, knowest I am innocent of the crimes whereof my implacable enemies accuse me, and that I have done no wrong to those who seek to take away my life; deliver not thine injured servant, therefore, into their hands; 'leave me not to mine oppressors.' The Son of David might use the words in their full and absolute sense, and plead for a glorious resurrection, on the foot of his having performed a perfect obedience to the law.

122. *Be surety for thy servant for good: let not he proud oppress me.*

The Psalmist finding himself ready to be seized by his insolent adversaries, like a helpless and insolvent debtor, entreateth the Almighty to appear in his defence, to take the matter into his own hands, to interpose and plead his cause, as his surety and advocate, in the day of trouble. Good Ezekiah uses the same word in the same sense, speaking of the time when death was about to make his claim upon the mortal part of him; 'O Lord, I am oppressed, עֲרֹבֵנִי, undertake, be surety for me:' Isa. xxxviii. 14. Happy the creatures, whose Creator is their surety, and hath interposed to rescue them from those great oppressors, sin, death, and Satan!

123. *Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.*

Salvation, whether temporal or spiritual, may be delayed; the 'eyes' of the sufferer may 'fail' with looking upward, and his earnest expectation may

be ready to break forth, in the words of Sisera's mother, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?' But what saith God, by his prophets and apostles? 'Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come;' Hab. ii. 3. 'Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come;' Heb. x. 37. The 'word' which hath promised it, is the word of truth, faithfulness, and 'righteousness;' the attributes of God are engaged for its accomplishment, and he cannot deny himself.

*124. Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes. 125. I am thy servant: give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.*

The consideration that we are the 'servants' of God, if indeed we are so, will always be successfully urged to the best of masters, as an argument why he should 'deal with us according to his mercy,' in the pardoning of our offences; 'teach us his statutes,' that we may know and do his will; and instruct us in his 'testimonies,' that we may believe aright concerning him.

*126. It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law.*

The 'law' of God 'is made void' by those who deny its authority, or its obligation; by those who render it of none effect through their traditions, or their lives. When a deluge of wickedness and impiety entering at these gates, hath overwhelmed a land, 'it is time for the Lord to work;' the great lawgiver will then exert his power, and vindicate his authority speedily. There is a certain measure

quity, which when communities, or individuals respectively, have filled up, the destroying angel is forth, and executes his commission. How should a man to fear, lest the next sin he commits shall fill up his measure, and seal his eternal !

*Therefore I love thy commandments above yea, above fine gold.*

the wickedness of those increaseth who avoid the divine law,' the zeal and 'love' of others should increase in proportion, to stem the torrent; and this may be done to a surprising degree by a few persons, who, after the example of the first Christians, can forsake all, to follow their Lord; who have the sense and the courage to forsake truth, wisdom, holiness, and heaven, to follow good, folly, sin, and the world; who can resolutely reject the glittering temptation, and say, 'I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.'

*Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning things to be right; or, Therefore all thy precepts I have approved; and I hate every way.*

for the same reason that the children of God, in the first of times, 'love his commandments,' they observe them 'all,' not observing such only as they can observe without giving offence, but, regardless of the censures of the world, doing their duty in every particular; not 'hating' some 'evil ways,' but at the same time walking in others, but extended manifesting their aversion to all alike. Of persons it is evident, that they make a con-

science of their doings, and their conduct to be uniform; the adversary will have nothing to say of them; they will do real service to the cause which they maintain; and, after having honoured their Master before men, they may be honoured before men and angels.

PE.—PART XVII.

129. *Thy testimonies are wonderful: let not my soul keep, or, observe, them.*

The Scriptures are 'wonderful,' with respect to the matter which they contain, the manner in which they are written, and the effects which they produce. They contain the sublimest spiritual truths veiled under external ceremonies and sacrificial figurative descriptions, typical histories, parables, similitudes, &c. When properly opened and understood, they terrify and humble, they convert and transform, they console and strengthen. We must delight to study and to 'observe' the testimonies of the will and the wisdom, the love and the power, of God most high! While we study these holy writings, let us not waste our time in idle employ our thoughts, and prostitute our attention, by doting on human follies, and wasting at human trifles.

130. *The entrance of thy words giveth light, and giveth understanding to the simple.*

The Scriptures are the appointed means of 'lightening' the mind with true and saving knowledge. They show us what we were, what we are, and what we shall be; they show us what God hath done for us, and what he expecteth of us.

for him; they show us the adversaries we have to encounter, and how to encounter them with success; they show us the mercy and the justice of the Lord, the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell. Thus will they 'give to the simple,' in a few days, a 'understanding' of those matters, which philosophy, for whole centuries, sought in vain.

131. *I opened my mouth and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.*

An eastern traveller, fatigued through toil, and scorched by heat, doth not, with more vehement desire, gasp for the cooling breeze, than the servant of God, in time of temptation and trouble, 'panteth' after that spirit of refreshment and consolation which breathes in the Scriptures of truth. The affections are the springs of human actions; no arguments are needful to impel, and no difficulties are sufficient to retard, the man who is in pursuit of an object which, with all his heart, he loves and 'longs for.' How happy is it when heaven, instead of earth, is that object!

132. *Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.*

A child of God is never so much afflicted, as when his heavenly Father seemeth, for a time, to have turned away his face from him. All lesser troubles vanish, when God doth but vouchsafe a look of paternal compassion. And since the love of Jehovah to his people is unchangeable as his nature, mercies formerly shown to others are most forcibly urged by the Psalmist in his petition for the like: 'Be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.'



133. *Order my steps in thy word ; and let not an iniquity have dominion over me.*

By the instruction of his ' word ' God bringeth us into the way of life ; by the aids of his grace he ' directeth ' and ' supporteth ' our ' steps ' in the way, enabling us, as we proceed, to overcome the sins which do beset us, so that they prevail not to turn us back, or to make us desist from travelling toward the city of our eternal habitation.

134. *Deliver me from the oppression of man : I will I keep thy precepts.*

He truly loveth God, who requesteth ' deliverance ' from ' oppression ' and persecution, that he may again enjoy the opportunities of ' keeping his precepts,' and of serving him without distraction. And gratitude for his deliverance will be, with such an one, an additional reason for using those opportunities, when they are restored, to the best advantage.

135. *Make thy face to shine upon thy servant and teach me thy statutes.*

The same sentiment is again expressed in different language. The Psalmist prayeth for a return of the divine favour, and for better days, that in peace and tranquillity he may learn and do the will of God. Tribulation is a dark and tempestuous night ; but Jehovah causeth ' his face to shine upon his people, and the effects are like those produced by the sun at his rising, when universal nature revives and rejoices, and clouds and darkness fly away.

136. *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.*

David, who, through this whole Psalm, so often and so ardently beseecheth God 'to teach him his statutes,' declareth in this verse his continual grief of heart, occasioned by seeing others break those statutes. Thus Lot, among the Sodomites, was vexed from day to day,' not so much at their rage of himself, as at 'seeing and hearing their lawful deeds:' 2 Pet. ii. 8. Thus Jeremiah telleth of the ungodly of his time, 'If ye will not hear, my soul will weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eyes shall weep sore, and run down with tears:' Jer. xiii. 17. Thus the holy Jesus 'looked round about on the Pharisees, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts,' Mark, iii. 5; and 'wept over' a city which had always persecuted, and was then about to crucify him, because it knew not the things which belonged to its peace:' Luke, xix. 41. Accept, O Lord, the tears which our blessed Redeemer shed, in the days of his flesh, for us, who should, but, alas! too often cannot, weep for our brethren, or for ourselves; and give us, at least, the grace of holy mourning, which in every sight is of great price.

#### TZADDI.—PART XVIII.

137. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.*

This portion of our Psalm is employed in celebrating the righteousness of God, manifested to us by his word, and by his dispensations, which that word both recordeth and explaineth. It is said of

the emperor Mauritius, that, upon seeing : children slain before his face, at the comma that bloody tyrant and usurper, Phocas, bi expecting the next stroke, with a philosophy divine, he exclaimed aloud, in these words of I ' Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright as judgments.' By faith he was assured of this truth, and nobly confessed it, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary. The last day demonstrate the same thing to the whole v and open the mouths of men and angels to de concerning all the divine proceedings, wha good Mauritius acknowledged, at the time, regard to the murder of his children.

138. *Thy testimonies, that thou hast comma are righteous and very faithful.*

The revelations of God's will are ' righteous and ' truth ;' his commands are just, and oug be obeyed ; his promises and his threatening infallibly come to pass, and deserve, abov things, to be regarded.

139. *My zeal hath consumed me ; because enemies have forgotten thy words.*

' Zeal ' is a high degree of love ; and whe object of that love is ill treated, it venteth its a mixture of grief and indignation, which ar sufficient to wear and ' consume' the heart. will be the case, where men rightly concei that dishonour which is continually done to by creatures whom he hath made and redee But never could the verse be uttered, with

<sup>1</sup> Baron. Annal. ad Ann. 602.

s of truth and propriety, by any one, as by son of God, who had such a sense of the Father's glory, and of man's sin, as no person else had. And, accordingly, when his zeal had kindled itself in purging the temple, St. John tells his disciples remembered that it was written, 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.' The passage where it is so written, is Psalm lxix. 9, and this passage is exactly parallel to this before us.

1. *Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it.*

Thy word is very pure,' in the original, 'tried, refined, purified, like gold in the furnace; absolute, perfect, without the dross of vanity and fallacy, which runs through human writings. The more we try the promises, the surer we shall find them.' This pure word hath likewise in it a power of purifying us. It containeth precepts and examples of purity, helps and encouragements to purity, the Spirit of purity goeth with it, and worketh in us. 'Therefore thy servant loveth it;' and no man but a true servant of God, can 'therefore' love it, because it is pure; since he who loves it must endeavour to be like it, to feel its efficacy, to be ruled by it, and conformed to it.

1. *I am small and despised: yet do not I forget thy precepts.*

Unfaithfulness to God will often reduce men to poverty, and bring upon them the contempt of the world; happy are they who, under these difficulties

pure gold is so fixed, that Boerhaave informs us of an experiment he made of it set in the eye of a glass-furnace for two months, without losing a single grain.

and discouragements, 'forget not his precept but still continue faithful, looking unto Jesus, who once 'endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God.' He xii. 2.

142. *Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.*

Men may decree wickedness by a law, or they may change their decrees, and, with them, what was right to-day, may be wrong to-morrow. But the law of God is 'righteousness,' and it is 'true to-day, and for ever. His justice, goodness, and fidelity are unchangeable; he will never forsake us, unless we forsake him, but will remember in our lowest estate, if, in that estate, we 'do not forget his precepts.'

143. *Trouble and anguish have taken hold upon me, have found me, yet thy commandments are my delights.*

We need not take pains, as many do, 'to find trouble and anguish,' for they will one day 'find us.' In that day, the revelations of God must be to us instead of all worldly 'delights' and pleasures, which will then have forsaken us; and we who forlorn and desolate will be our state, if we shall have no other delights, no other pleasures, to succeed them, and to accompany us into eternity. Let our study be now in the Scriptures, if we expect our comfort from them in time to come.

144. *The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.*

In every sense, O Lord Jesu, thy righteousness

everlasting.' Grant us the 'understanding' of every sense, and we 'shall live,' in thee now, with thee for ever.

*Twenty-sixth Day.—Evening Prayer.*

KOPH.—PART XIX.

145. *I cried with my whole heart ; hear me, O Lord : I will keep thy statutes.* 146. *I cried unto thee, O Lord ; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies.*

Believers, in time of affliction, make their prayer fervent with fervour and importunity, petitioning for deliverance, that they may the better serve their God, and keep his laws.

147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and I hoped in thy word.* 148. *Mine eyes prevented night watches, that I might meditate in thy law.*

It is a certain sign that our hearts are set upon work, when the thoughts of it cause sleep to depart from us, and we awake readily, constantly, and early, to the performance of it. David devoted in the holy exercises of prayer and meditation ; therefore he 'prevented the dawning of the morning,' and was beforehand with the light itself ; before his 'eyes prevented the watches,' that is, the last of those watches, into which the night was by the Jews divided ; he heeded not the watchman's call, but was stirring before it could be given. Climate and constitution will, doubtless, make a difference, and claim considerable allowance ; but by Christians, who enjoy their health, temperate weather, the sun should not be suffered to shine in vain, nor the golden hours of the

morning to glide away unimproved; since David's Lord, as well as of David, it is said, 'in morning rising up, a great while before day went out and departed into a solitary place, there prayed.' Mark, i. 35.

149. *Hear my voice, according unto thy low kindness; O Lord, quicken me according to judgment, that is thy word.* 150. *They draw that follow after mischief: they are far from law.* 151. *Thou art near, O Lord; and all thy mandments are truth.*

If our enemies 'draw nigh' to destroy us, God still 'nearer' to preserve us; and, however 'word' may be rejected by the wicked, the faithful always find it to be 'true,' to their great endless comfort.

152. *Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old, that thou hast founded them for ever.*

This portion of our Psalm endeth with the triumph of faith over all dangers and temptations. 'Concerning thy testimonies,' the revelation of thy will, thy counsels for the salvation of thy servants, 'I have known of old,' by faith, and by own experience, as well as that of others, 'thou hast founded them for ever;' they are immutable and everlasting as the attributes of great Author, and can never fail those who upon them, in time, or in eternity.

#### RESH.—PART XX.

153. *Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: I do not forget thy law.*

It is happy when our 'afflictions' do not

us to 'forget the law of God;' then have we confidence toward him in our prayers, that he will 'consider' and regard our sufferings, as he did those of Israel in Egypt, and come down to 'deliver' us out of all our troubles; for Israel is still in Egypt, while the church is in the world; but let us remember the promise, and rejoice in hope.

154. *Plead my cause, and deliver me : quicken me according to thy word.*

God is the patron of his people, to 'plead' their 'cause;' their Redeemer, to 'deliver them out of troubles; the Author and Fountain of their life, to 'quicken' and support them. We may, therefore, have recourse to him at all times, as an Advocate, a Saviour, and a Comforter, for the defence of our cause, the deliverance of our persons, and the support of our hearts. And all this, 'according to his word,' in which he hath engaged thus to patronize, to rescue, and to strengthen those who trust in him, and apply to him.

155. *Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes.*

The 'salvation' which is nigh to the faithful because they diligently and earnestly seek to know and to do the will of God revealed to them in his word, is 'far from the wicked,' because 'they seek not his statutes,' nor concern themselves to know what they are, much less to observe and practise them.

156. *Great are thy tender mercies, O Lord : quicken me according to thy judgments, that is, thy word.* 157. *Many are my persecutors, and mine ene-*



*mies; yet do I not decline from thy testimonies.*  
 158. *I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved;*  
*because they kept not thy word.*

Persecution tempteth men to apostacy, and is the great trial of our fidelity to God and to his word. He who, in such circumstances, forgetteth his own sufferings, to commiserate the sin and folly of his persecutors, is a true follower, as David was a forerunner, of Jesus Christ.

159. *Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O Lord, according to thy loving-kindness.* 160. *Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.*

It is observable how the Psalmist delighteth to dwell on these two sweet notes; the 'loving-kindness' of God in promising salvation, and his 'truth' in the constant performance of that promise to his church, while she 'loves' and adheres to his 'precepts.' Thus it hath been 'from the beginning,' and thus it will be, until the whole counsel of heaven shall at length be fulfilled, by the resurrection and salvation of the just.

#### SCHIN.—PART XXI.

161. *Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.* 162. *I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.*

David was 'persecuted' by Saul and his associates, 'without a cause.' The life of Saul was spared by him, because 'he stood in awe of God's word,' and preferred the comfortable reflection of having obeyed its injunctions, to all the 'spoil,' and to those many advantages, that would have accrued

n, by the overthrow and death of his implacable adversary, who acknowledged, upon the occasion, 'Thou art more righteous than I.' 1 Sam. 17. The sufferings of the body are soon over; joys of conscience have no end.

3. *I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I*

The word of truth is the proper object of our love; and every thing which is contrary to it deserves our 'hatred and abhorrence;' nor is life worth preserving at the expense either of our conscience or our virtue.

4. *Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments.*

They who, like David, during the time of persecution and affliction, put their trust in God, and his decision of their cause, will always find reason, as David did, to 'praise him seven times a day or continually, for his just decrees and 'righteous judgments' concerning them.

5. *Great peace have they which love thy law: nothing shall offend them.*

In the midst of the storms and tempests of the world, there is a perfect calm in the breasts of those who not only do the will of God, but 'love' to do it. They are at peace with God, by the blood of reconciliation; at peace with themselves, by the answer of a good conscience, and the subjection of those passions which war against the soul; at peace with men, by the spirit of charity; and the whole soul is so at peace with them, that all things conspire together for their good. No external troubles

can rob them of this 'great peace,' no 'offences stumbling-blocks,' which are thrown in their way by persecution or temptation, by the malice of enemies or the apostacy of friends, by any thing which they see, hear of, or feel, can detain or divert them from their course. Heavenly love surmounts every obstacle, and runs with delight the way of God's commandments.

*166. Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, done thy commandments.*

This is the true posture of a Christian, in which he need not fear to be found by his last and greatest enemy, death, 'doing' his duty, and 'hoping' salvation from the person who is his Maker, as well as his Redeemer, and who, consequently, expects to be obeyed, no less than to be believed in.

*167. My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and I them exceedingly. 168. I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee.*

The 'love of God's testimonies,' and the consideration, that all 'our ways are before him,' subject to his immediate inspection, are two powerful motives to obedience. The plea of having 'the divine precepts,' &c. in the mouth of David or any other believer, intendeth sincerity, not perfection, and is alleged as an evidence of grace, not a claim of merit. Christ alone kept the old law, and he enableth us to observe the new.

#### TAU.—PART XXII.

*169. Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord: give me understanding according to thy word. 1*

*Let my supplication come before thee : deliver me according to thy word.*

The Psalmist still continueth instant in prayer for 'understanding,' to direct him in the midst of dangers and temptations, and for 'deliverance' out of them all, when God shall see fit to accomplish the promises made in his 'word.' These are blessings for which a man cannot be too frequent, or too earnest, in his petitions to the throne of heaven.

171. *My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.* 172. *My tongue shall speak of thy word : for all thy commandments are righteousness.*

He who obtaineth his requests, and is made a partaker of that grace and salvation for which he so fervently prayed, will edify men, by singing the 'praises,' and proclaiming the 'righteousness' of God his Saviour.

173. *Let thine hand help me : for I have chosen thy precepts.* 174. *I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord : and thy law is my delight.*

'Salvation' by the 'hand,' or arm of Jehovah (which is often in Scripture a title of Messiah) hath been the object of the hopes, the desires, and 'longing' expectation of the faithful, from Adam to this hour ; and will continue so to be, until He, who hath already visited us in great humility, shall come again in glorious majesty, to complete our redemption, and take us to himself.

175. *Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee ; and let thy judgments help me.*

The 'life' which God granteth and preserveth to  
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us, whether it be the natural life of the body, spiritual life of the soul, (for both are from God) should be employed in 'praising' him. This is for his mercies we are always ready to praise him, when we are in danger, but often forgetful to praise him, when delivered out of it.

176. *I have gone astray like a lost sheep: so servant; for I do not forget thy commandments*

It is doubtful whether David here speaks of his misery or his sin; of his 'wandering,' as an exile in foreign lands, or of his 'going astray' from the 'commandments' of his God, though he has altogether 'forgotten,' but was desirous of returning again to the observance of them, and therefore addresses the great Shepherd to 'seek' and 'bring back his 'lost sheep.' In the application of this passage to ourselves, it matters not which interpretation we adopt, since we are both sinners and exiles; exiles, because sinners; 'we have wandered and strayed from God's ways, like lost sheep, and are, for that reason, excluded from our heavenly city and country, to wander for a time in the darkness. Restore us, O Lord Jesu, by thy great righteousness, and by thy power, to glory!

<sup>1</sup> 'Erravi sicut ovis—Omnes nos quasi oves erravimus.'  
 lili. 6. 'Sed nos bonus ille Pastor humeris reportavit.'  
 xv. 5. Bossuet. Mr. Merrick's Poetical Paraphrase of this verse is so beautiful and affecting, that I cannot refrain from joining it—

"Thine eyes in me the sheep behold,  
 Whose feet have wander'd from the fold:  
 That guideless, helpless, strives in vain  
 To find its safe retreat again;  
 Now listens, if perchance its ear  
 The Shepherd's well-known voice may hear;

*Twenty-seventh Day.—Morning Prayer.*

# PSALM CXX.

MENT.—This, and the fourteen Psalms which follow are entitled, 'Psalms of Degrees, or of Ascensions.' For the reason they were so called is altogether uncertain. Certainly, however, it is, that they are most instructive and pleasing positions, wonderfully calculated to elevate the soul to God; and that the Christian, as he proceeds from one degree of truth to another, in his way towards eternal felicity, cannot employ himself better than in meditation on them. In the title of these Psalms, the author, most probably David, commends the falsehood, the treachery, and the violence of the wicked, amongst whom he grieveth that his pilgrimage is prolonged.

*In my distress, I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me. 2. Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying and from a deceitful tongue.*

The prophet relateth the success of his prayer to Jehovah in time of trouble. He 'cried,' was 'heard.' The particular species of trouble under which he then laboured, was that caused by the malice and treachery of his adversaries, who were with 'lying lips' bore false witness against him, or with a 'deceitful tongue' tried to ensnare him, and to draw something from him on which they might ground an accusation. Thus the Jews dealt with Christ; and men of their cast and complexion have, in all ages, dealt thus with his true followers. From such 'lips,' and such 'tongues,'

Now, as the tempests round it blow,  
In plaintive accents vents its woe.  
Great Ruler of this earthly ball,  
Do thou my erring steps recall:  
O seek thou him who thee has sought,  
Nor turns from thy decrees his thought."

God only can 'deliver' the persons and the reputations of the most innocent.

3. *What shall be given unto thee! or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?* 4. *Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.*

Some render the first of these two verses a little differently: 'What shall a false tongue give thee, or what shall it add to thee?' The sense will be much the same, whether the Psalmist be supposed to address his question to the false tongue or to him who is the owner of it. The purport of the question plainly is this: What profit or advantage do you expect to reap from this practice of lying and slandering? what will at last be its end and its reward? Then followeth the answer: 'Sharp arrows of the mighty one,' גִּבּוֹר, who is the avenger of truth and innocence; with a fire that burns fiercely, and burns long, like that which was made of 'juniper,' or some wood used in those days, remarkable for increasing and retaining heat; punishments justly inflicted on a tongue, the words of which have been keen and killing as arrows, and which, by its lies and calumnies, hath contributed to set the world on fire. We read in the gospel of one who exclaimed, 'Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

5. *Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!*

The Psalmist lamenteth his long continuance among those deceitful and malicious men, whom he compareth to the wild, barbarous, and idolatrous Arabs, the descendants of 'Kedar,' the son of Ish-

Gen. xxv. 13. The former part of the verse greater propriety, perhaps, rendered, by the translators and expositors, thus: 'Woe at my sojourning is prolonged—' כי נרתי מִשְׁכָּן, I, or, my dwelling is, among the tents of

When our Lord was upon earth, the Jews come the spiritual Ishmaelites, sons of the man, persecutors of the sons of the free—and the children of promise. 'O faithless perverse generation,' saith he, 'how long shall I suffer you? how long shall I suffer you?' Matt. xii. 17. 'And as then he that was born of the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now.' Gal. iv. 29. The Jews daily sigheth and groaneth, because her sojourning is prolonged,' and she dwelleth among the tents of various denominations, among those who take delight in vexing and troubling her. We are 'the tents of Kedar,' among which we dwell in the wilderness, longing to depart, and to dwell in the city of the living God.

*My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace; or, I am a man of peace: when I speak, they are for war.*

As was the case of David, much more might we, of David make the same complaint, that we dwell with them that hated peace; that although he was 'a man of peace,' meek, lowly, and gentle in his deportment to all around him; although he came to make peace, and to reconcile us in heaven and earth; although his commandments and his preaching were of peace, and love, of the kingdom of God; yet no sooner did he open his mouth to 'speak upon these divine sub-



jects, but his enemies were up in arms, read apprehend, to accuse, to condemn, and to crucify him. Marvel not, O disciple of Jesus! if the world hate and oppose thee; but pray only, that what thou shalt be used as he was, thou mayest be able to bear that usage as he did.

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### PSALM CXXI.

**ARGUMENT.**—In this Psalm, the prophet, 1, 2. *introduces* a person, most probably an Israelite on his way to Jerusalem, expressing his trust and confidence in Jehovah, the Maker of heaven and earth, of whose favour and protection, at all times and in all dangers, the prophet, 3—8. *assures* him. The promises, like those in the ninety-first Psalm, were, in a full and spiritual sense, made good to Messiah, and are daily accomplishing in the members of his mystical body the Christian church. Bishop Lowth supposeth the two verses to be spoken by David, when going out to war, as an answer of encouragement to be made by the high-priest at the holy place. In this case, the idea of warfare is added to that of pilgrimage, and the Psalm rendered still more applicable to us, as well as to the true David our King.

1. *I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help.* 2. *My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.*

The truly Israelite, amidst the dangers of earthly pilgrimage and warfare, looketh continually towards the heavenly city, whither he is travelling. Faith sheweth him afar off the everlasting help, from whence cometh the help, which must bring him in safety to them. He 'lifteth up his eyes in prayer to the Almighty, whose temple and habitation are thereon. He putteth not his trust in any creature, but imploreth aid immediately of'

'who made heaven and earth,' and who, consequently, hath power over all things in both.

*3. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved : he that keepeth thee will not slumber. 4. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.*

In the first two verses, we heard the believer declaring his resolution to trust in God. The Prophet now commendeth that resolution, and encourgeth him to persevere in it. As if he had said, thou dost well to expect help from Jehovah alone; overlook the vanities here below; to place thy confidence, and set thy affections on him who dwelleth above. Know therefore assuredly, that he will be with thee in the way in which thou goest; will preserve thee from falling, and defend thee from all dangers; for in him thou hast a guardian, who is not, like all others, liable to remit his care, being subject to sleep or death. The eye of his providence is upon thee, and that is always open. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.'

*5. The Lord is thy keeper : the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. 6. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.*

The meaning is, that the good man, during his journey through life, shall be under God's protection at all seasons; as Israel in the wilderness was defended from the burning heat of the sun, by the moist and refreshing shadow of the cloud; and cured against the inclement influences of the eternal heavens, by the kindly warmth and splendour diffused from the pillar of fire. Be thou with us, thy servants, O Lord, in the world, as thou

wast with Israel in the wilderness; suffer not our virtue to dissolve before the sultry gleams of prosperity; permit it not to be frozen by the chilling blast of adversity.

*7. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. 8. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth for evermore.*

To dissipate our fears, and remove every ground of diffidence, Jehovah promiseth, by his holy prophet, to 'preserve us from all evil' which might befall us in the way, either by turning it aside, or turning it finally to our advantage, so that we shall not perish, but see our labours happily begun and ended in him; he 'shall preserve our going out, and our coming in,' until, through all the vicissitudes of this mortal state, he shall have brought us into his holy 'temple,' there to become 'pillars,' and to 'go no more out.' Rev. iii. 12.

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### PSALM CXXII.

**ARGUMENT.**—The author of this Psalm, as we are informed by its title, was David. The subject of it is that joy which the people were wont to express upon their going up in companies to keep a feast at Jerusalem, when the divine services were regulated, and that city was appointed to be the place of public worship. Every thing which can be said upon this topic, must naturally hold good in its application to the Christian church, and the celebration of her feasts; at which seasons the believer will as naturally extend his thoughts to the Jerusalem above, and to that festival which shall one day be there kept by all the people of God.

1. *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.*

Great was the joy of an Israelite, when his brethren called upon him to accompany them, on some festive occasion, to the tabernacle, or temple at Jerusalem; great is the joy of a Christian, when he is invited, in like manner, to celebrate the feasts of the church, to commemorate the nativity, or the resurrection, and to eat and drink at the table of his Lord. Such, in kind, but far greater in degree, is that gladness which the pious soul experiences, when she is called hence; when descending angels say unto her, Thy labour and sorrow are at an end, and the hour of thy enlargement is come; put off mortality and misery at once; quit the house of bondage, and the land of thy captivity; fly forth, and 'let us go together into the house of the Lord, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

2. *Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!*

Yes, O thou holy and happy city of peace, and love, and everlasting delight, our God will in time bring us to behold, and to enter thee; 'our feet,' which now, with many a weary step, tread the earth, 'shall' one day 'stand within thy gates,' which are opened to all believers; we shall at length rest in thy celestial mansions, and converse for ever with thy blessed inhabitants!

3. *Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.*

We see thee not, indeed, as yet, but we hear of

thy stability, thy unity, thy beauty, and thy magnificence. Thy foundations are firm upon the holy hills; they are garnished with all manner of precious stones; and in them are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Thy gates are of pearl, twelve in number, and open to all quarters, for the tribes of the spiritual Israel to come in. Thy streets are of pure gold, as it were transparent glass; thou art crowned with the unfading brightness of eternal glory; and the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple in the midst of thee. All these glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God! And yet, when we come to see thee with our eyes, we shall be forced to confess, as the queen of Sheba did upon viewing the earthly Jerusalem, with its material temple, and the court of its mortal king, that thou far 'exceedest the fame which we had heard,' and that 'the half was not told us.' 1 Kings, x. 7.

4. *Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto, or, according to, the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.*

As all the 'tribes' of Israel, three times in the year, were seen 'going up' to the old Jerusalem in compliance with the 'testimonies,' the injunctions and institutions of their law, to acknowledge the mercies, and to give thanks unto the name of 'Jehovah,' who had done such great things for them; so from the ends of the earth are the redeemed of the Lord, out of every nation, and kindred, and people, continually ascending, by faith and charity, to the new Jerusalem. St. John saw the nations of them that were saved, walking in the light of the heavenly city, and he heard her streets re-

sound with the hallelujahs of ten thousand times ten thousand.

*5. For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.*

The Israelites resorted to Jerusalem, because it was the metropolis of the country, and there was the residence of their monarchs, after the kingdom was established in 'the house of David.' But, alas! that metropolis is desolate, and 'the thrones of judgment,' which were therein, have been long since cast down to the ground. A Jerusalem, however, remains, which shall never be moved; in that Jerusalem is the throne of eternal judgment erected, and the Son of David sitteth upon it. Of him it was said by the angel to Mary, 'The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.' Luke, 32. And he himself thus addressed his apostles: 'Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Matt. xix. 28.

*6. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.*

In this latter part of our Psalm, the members of the Israelitish church are exhorted to pray for its peace and welfare. What that church was, the Christian church militant upon earth now is, and commandeth, in like manner, the prayers of all Christian people for its peace and welfare in a troublesome and contentious world. Its increase here

below, is in reality the increase of Jerusalem ab of which it is a part, and ought to be a re blance. Heaven has therefore decreed, that : who contribute their labours, as well as their p ers, to promote so good and so glorious an : shall enjoy its protection, and its blessing shal upon the work of their hands; 'They shall pro that love thee.'

*7. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity, plenteousness, within thy palaces.*

Come, O thou divine Spirit of peace and I who didst reside in the soul of the holy Jesus, scend into his mystical body, and fill us, who c pose it, with all his heavenly tempers; put an to heresies, heal all schisms, cause bitter con tions to cease, abolish every enmity, and make to be of one mind in thy holy city; that so, 'p being within her walls,' her citizens may themselves to every profitable employment, 'plenteousness' of grace, wisdom, and truth well as of earthly blessings, may be in all 'palaces.' Thus will she become a lively por of that place which is prepared for them that one another, where, with one heart and one v they shall ascribe 'salvation and glory to God to the Lamb.'

*8. For my brethren and companion's sake I now say, Peace be within thee. 9. Because of house of the Lord our God I seek thy good.*

In these concluding verses, the Psalmist clareth the two motives, which induced him to t his best wishes, and to use his best endeavours the prosperity of Jerusalem; namely, love of

ren, whose happiness was involved in that of city; and love of God, who had there fixed residence of his glory. These motives are ever ready, and ought, surely, to operate with marvelous energy upon our hearts, to stir us up to imitate the pattern now before us, in fervent zeal and arduous labour, for the salvation of men, and the glory of their great Redeemer; both which will then be complete, when the church militant shall become triumphant, and the heavenly paradise shall be filled with plants taken from its terrestrial nursery. Theodore Zuinger, of whom some account may be found in Thuanus, when he lay on his death-bed, took his leave of the world in a paraphrase of the foregoing Psalm; giving it the same turn that I have given to it above. I have never been able to get a sight of the original; but one may

since the publication of the first edition, a learned friend obliged me with a copy of these Latin verses of Zuinger, copied from the 303d page of *Vitæ Germanorum Medicorum* by Melchior Adamus. They are as follow:

O lux candida, lux mihi  
 Læti conscia transitus!  
 Per Christi meritum patet  
 Vitæ porta beatæ.  
 Me status revocat dies  
 Augustam Domini ad domum:  
 Jam sacra ætherii premam  
 Lætus limina templi.  
 Jam visam Solymæ edita  
 Cælo culmina, et ædium  
 Cœtus angelicos, suo et  
 Augustam populo urbem:  
 Urbem quam procul infimis  
 Terræ finibus exciti  
 Petunt Christiadæ, et Deum  
 Laudent voce perenni:  
 Jussam cœlitus oppidis



venture I believe, to say, that it has lost no  
in a translation of it by the learned and pious  
Merrick; which is so excellent, that I must  
leave to present it to the reader. Some of  
lines are retained in his more literal poetical  
version, published in 1765. It may serve as a fine  
specimen of the noble and exalted use which  
Christian may and ought to make of the Psalms  
of David.

## 1.

What joy, while thus I view the day  
That warns my thirsting soul away,  
What transports fill my breast!  
For, lo, my great Redeemer's power  
Unfolds the everlasting door,  
And leads me to his rest.

## 2.

The festal morn, my God, is come,  
That calls me to the hallow'd dome,  
Thy presence to adore;

*Urbem jus dare cæteris,  
Et sedem fore Davidis  
Cuncta in sæcla beati.  
Mater nobilis urbium!  
Semper te bona pax amat:  
Et te semper amantibus  
Cedunt omnia recte.  
Semper pax tua mœnia  
Colit; semper in atriis  
Tuis copia dexterâ  
Largâ munera fundit.  
Dulcis Christiadûm domus,  
Civem adscribe novitium;  
Sola comitata Caritas—  
Spesque Fidesque valete.*

My feet the summons shall attend,  
With willing steps thy courts ascend,  
And tread th' ethereal floor.

## 3.

E'en now to my expecting eyes  
The heav'n-built towers of Salem rise ;  
E'en now, with glad survey,  
I view her mansions, that contain  
Th' angelic forms, an awful train,  
And shine with cloudless day.

## 4.

Hither from earth's remotest end,  
Lo, the redeem'd of God ascend,  
Their tribute hither bring :  
Here, crown'd with everlasting joy,  
In hymns of praise their tongues employ,  
And hail th' immortal King :

## 5.

Great Salem's King ; who bids each state  
On her decrees dependent wait ;  
In her, ere time begun,  
High on eternal base uprear'd,  
His hands the regal seat prepar'd,  
For Jesse's favour'd son.

## 6.

Mother of cities ! o'er thy head  
See Peace, with healing wings outspread,  
Delighted fix her stay.

How blest, who calls himself thy friend  
 Success his labours shall attend,  
 And safely guard his way.

## 7.

Thy walls, remote from hostile fear,  
 Nor the loud voice of tumult hear,  
 Nor war's wild wastes deplore:  
 There smiling plenty takes her stand,  
 And in thy courts, with lavish hand,  
 Has pour'd forth all her store.

## 8.

Let me, blest seat, my name behold  
 Among thy citizens enroll'd,  
 In thee for ever dwell,  
 Let charity my steps attend,  
 My sole companion and my friend,  
 And faith and hope farewell!

## PSALM CXXIII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm containeth, 1, 2. an act of confidence in God, with, 3, 4. a prayer for deliverance from reproach and contempt which infidelity and sensuality wont to pour upon the afflicted people of God.

1. *Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.*

The church, when distressed and persecuted upon earth, 'lifteth up her eyes to him that dwelleth in the heavens, from thence beholding

ordering all things here below. It is by his permission that she is depressed and insulted; and he only can deliver her out of the hands of her enemies.

2. *Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the and of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.*

The servants of God, like other servants, if they are injured and suffer violence, expect redress and protection from the Master whose they are, and whom they serve. Under the law of Moses, a master was to demand satisfaction, and to have it made him, for any hurt done to his servant. And shall not the best of masters avenge the wrongs done to those who serve him; and done, perhaps, because they serve him? Without doubt, he will avenge them speedily and reward the sufferers gloriously.

3. *Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us; for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.*

Unbelieving, ungodly, and worldly men, who are 'at ease,' and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, will always be ready to cast upon the afflicted servants of Christ some portion of that reproach and contempt, which were so plentifully poured upon their blessed Master, in the day of his passion, and indeed through his whole life. With these they may justly complain that 'their souls

are exceedingly filled,' insomuch that th  
 compelled to exclaim with redoubled earne  
 ' Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have merc  
 us.' And let them know, for their comfor  
 the Lord will ' have mercy upon them,' in th  
 when sensuality shall be succeeded by forme  
 pride shall end in shame and confusion;  
 patient poverty shall inherit everlasting  
 and oppressed humility shall be exalted to a  
 above the stars.

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PSALM CXXIV.

ARGUMENT.—In this Psalm, which, as we are info  
 the title, hath David for its author, the church descri  
 danger in which she hath been, and giveth to God al  
 glory of her deliverance out of it.

1. *If it had not been the Lord who was on o  
 now may Israel say; 2. If it had not been th  
 who was on our side, when men rose up again  
 3. Then they had swallowed us up quick, whe  
 wrath was kindled against us.*

The people of Israel, rescued from imp  
 ruin, break forth into a joyful acknowledgn  
 that almighty aid, to which they were indebt  
 their deliverance. ' Men' rose up against the  
 ' Jehovah' was on their side; men intended  
 vour, but God interposed to save. May no  
 Israel of God' say, in like manner, ' If the  
 had not been on our side,' when our spiritua  
 mies, sin, death, and hell, were in arms again  
 surely now ' they had swallowed us up quick  
 we had perished everlastingly? It is thou, O  
 Jesu, who hast wrought for us this great salv

it is thou who from the beginning hast preserved thy church in the world, amidst the persecutions which must otherwise have put an end to its very existence.

*4. Then the waters had overwhelmed us; the stream, or, torrent, had gone over our soul: 5. Then the proud, or, swelling, waters had gone over our soul.*

The redeemed are astonished, upon looking back, at the greatness of the danger to which they had been exposed. They can compare the fury and insolence of their adversaries to nothing but overwhelming floods and desolating torrents; and they consider themselves as snatched by a miracle from instant destruction. Happy they, who are taken from the evil to come, and have passed from the miseries of earth to the felicities of heaven, where they are neither tempted nor molested more. The devout Christian, whom in perilous times, and towards the close of life, a gracious Providence has thrown ashore in some sequestered corner, from whence he views those secular tumults with which he hath no further concern, is perhaps arrived at the next degree of happiness to that of just spirits made perfect.

*6. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. 7. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.*

The marvellous deliverance of Israel is illustrated by two other images. It is compared to the escape of a lamb from the jaws of a wolf, or a lion; and to that of a bird, by the breaking of the snare in

which it had been entangled, before the fowler came to seize and to kill it. Save us, O God, from the rage and the subtilty of our spiritual adversary; save us from his teeth, when he would devour; from his snares, when he would deceive: suffer us not, either by persecution or temptation, to fall from thee; let the lion gnash his teeth, and the fowler look for his captive in vain; that so we too may sing the song of Zion in thy heavenly kingdom, and say, 'Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us over for a prey unto their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.'

8. *Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*

The great lesson which this Psalm, from the beginning to the end, inculcates, is, that for every deliverance, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature, we should, in imitation of the saints above, ascribe 'Salvation to God and the Lamb.'

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### PSALM CXXV.

ARGUMENT.—In this Psalm the church is comforted with the promises, 1. 2. of God's protection, and, 3. of his removing, in due time, from his inheritance the rod of the oppressor; when, 4. the faithful will be rewarded, and, 5. apostates punished with other workers of iniquity. *Aben Ezra*, as cited by *Dr. Hammond*, applieth the Psalm to the days of *Messiah*.

1. *They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.*
2. *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem.*

rd is round about his people from henceforth  
ver.

ability of the church, and the protection  
her by Jehovah, were of old represented  
ountain on which the divine presence re-  
d by the hills which encompassed Jeru-  
as to render that city in a manner im-  
a. While her inhabitants continued to  
the Lord,' this was the case. But when  
une faithless and disobedient, she became  
d like another city. Let not our 'trust in  
a presumptuous, ungrounded assurance;  
be a confidence springing from faith un-  
out of a pure heart, a good conscience,  
ent charity. Then shall our situation,  
as a church or as individuals, resemble  
e holy mount in the beloved city, and our  
be unto us a fortress, and a wall round  
But let us never forget, that the promises  
ke those to Israel, are conditional: 'Be-  
unbelief they were broken 'off; and we  
faith.'

*the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon  
'the righteous: lest the righteous put forth  
ds unto iniquity.*

nay, and often doth, permit 'the rod' or  
of the wicked to fall upon the lot of  
teous' in this world. But it is only for  
oses of chastisement, or probation. The  
t suffered to 'rest,' or abide, there too long,  
'righteous,' harassed and worn down by  
on, and seeing no end of their calamities,  
e tempted to 'put their hands to iniquity,'



and practise that wickedness which they find to prosper so well here below. The import of this verse seemeth to be the same with that of our Lord's prediction concerning the troubles of the latter days. 'Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved. But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.' Matt. xxiv. 21, 22.

4. *Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in heart.* 5. *As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity; but peace shall be upon Israel.*

The 'good and upright in heart' are they who stand steady in every change of circumstances; who complain not of God's dispensations, but, believing every thing to be best which he ordains, adhere to him with a will entirely conformed to his, in adversity no less than in prosperity. To these Jehovah will finally 'do good;' and they shall receive the reward of their faith and patience; while such as, in time of trial, have fallen away, and returned no more, shall be 'led forth' to punishment 'with the workers of iniquity,' to whose company their apostacy hath joined them. And then, 'peace shall be upon the Israel of God,' with joy and gladness, for evermore.

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*Twenty-seventh Day.—Evening Prayer.*

PSALM CXXVI.

**COMMENT.**—In this Psalm the children of Zion, 1—3. describe the joy consequent upon their restoration from captivity; 4. they pray God to bring back the rest of their countrymen, and to complete his work; 5, 6. they foresee and edict the success of their labours in rebuilding their ruined city with its temple, and cultivating again their desolated country. The return of Israel from Babylon holds forth a figure of the same import with the exodus of that people from Egypt. And this Psalm, like the prophecies of Isaiah, representeth the blessed effects of a spiritual redemption, in words primarily alluding to that temporal release.

*. When the Lord turned again the captivity of us, we were like them that dream.*

That Cyrus should issue a decree for the Jews to return to their own country, and to rebuild their city and temple; that he should dismiss such a number of captives, not only without money and without price, but should send them home laden with presents, Ezra, i. 1—4, this was the work of Jehovah, who only could thus ‘turn the captivity of Zion.’ A restoration so complete, so strange and unlooked for, brought about at once, without any endeavours used on the side of Israel, seemed in all these respects as a ‘dream;’ and the parties concerned, when they saw and heard such things, could scarcely believe themselves to be awake. That the King of kings, of his own free love and mercy, should take pity on poor mankind, in their more grievous captivity under sin and death; that he should send his only Son to purchase their liberty, his Spirit to enrich, and

conduct them to their country above, and heralds to proclaim such unexpected deliverance to all the world; this likewise was the work of the same Jehovah who only could thus 'turn again the captivity of his Zion.' Sinners, when tidings of a salvation so great and marvellous are preached to them, think themselves in a 'dream' and with difficulty give credit even to the royal proclamation, though the great seal of heaven is affixed to it.

2. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, as our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for the*  
 3. *The Lord hath done great things for us; where we are glad.*

The people of God soon find, that they are not mocked with illusions, but that all about them is reality and truth. Then sorrow and sighing, fear and distrust, fly away together. Joy fills the hearts, and overflows by their tongues, in songs of praise. The nations hear, and are astonished, at the hand of Jehovah in the restoration of his people; 'Jehovah hath done great things for them.' The chosen people echo back the glad sound, and reply, with transports of gratitude 'Jehovah hath done great things for us, where we are glad.' Every word of this agreeth not more exactly to the return from Babylon, than it do to that eternal redemption thereby prefigured which is the grand subject of thanksgiving in the Christian church.

4. *Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the stream in the south.*

joy occasioned by Cyrus's proclamation been described in the former part of the psalm, we may now suppose some of the Jews to set out on their return home; at which time, and during their journey, they prefer this prayer to God, that he would be pleased to bring down upon the thirsty regions of the 'south,' a plentiful rain, to people the land, and by their labours put an end to the desolations of Judah. That God would increase the number of true converts from the Gentiles to the church, to clear and cultivate the wilderness, to build and to ornament the whole world, could be the prayer of every labourer in that land, of every citizen in that city.

*They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. 6. He shall forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing abundance with him.*

Fatigue of travelling from Babylon to Judea; a melancholy prospect of a long-depopulated, and ruined city; the toil necessary to be undergone, before the former could be again brought forth, and the latter rebuilt; all these consi-

der the image is taken from the 'torrents' in the deserts of Judea: in Idumæa, Arabia Petrea, &c. a mountainous country. These torrents were continually dried up in summer; see Job, xi. 17, 18; and as constantly 'returned' in rainy season, and filled again their deserted channels. The object of the comparison seems to be the 'return' and refreshment (not 'rivers') but 'torrents;' which yearly leave dry, but fill them again; as the Jews had left their country desolate, but now 'flowed again' into it. Bishop Lowth, in his Annotations.—Dr. Durrell renders this verse as follows: turning of our captivity, O Lord, is as streams in

derations could not but allay the joy of the captives, and even draw many tears from them. They are therefore comforted with a gracious promise, that God would give a blessing to the labour of their hands, and crown them with success, that they should once more see Jerusalem in prosperity, and behold in Zion the beauty of her towers. This promise is conveyed under images borrowed from the instructive scenes of agriculture. The sweat of his brows the husbandman tills his field, and casts the seed into the ground, where, in winter time, it lies dead and buried. A dark and cold winter succeeds, and all seems to be lost. But with the return of spring, universal nature revives, and the once-desolated fields are covered with green crops, which, when matured by the sun's heat, the joyful reapers cut down, and it is brought home in triumphant shouts of joy. Here, O disciples of Jesus, behold an emblem of thy present labor and thy future reward. Thou 'sowest,' perhaps with tears; thou doest thy duty amidst persecutions, affliction, sickness, pain, and sorrow; thou labourest in the church, and no account is made of thy labours; no profit seems likely to arise from them. Nay, thou must thyself drop into the dust of the grave, and all the storms of that winter must pass over thee until thy form shall be perished, and thou shalt see corruption. Yet the day is coming when thou shalt 'reap in joy;' and plentiful shall be thy harvest. For thus thy blessed Master 'went weeping, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, bearing precious seed,' and sowing it in the earth, till at length his own body was buried, and a grain of wheat, in the furrow of the grave. He then arose, and is now in heaven; from whence

doubtless come again with rejoicing,' with  
 ice of the archangel and the trump of God,  
 ing his sheaves with him.' Then shall every  
 receive the fruit of his works, and have praise  
 l.

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 PSALM CXXVII.

MENT.—If this Psalm were written by Solomon, or by  
 l for Solomon, as the title importeth, it was probably  
 again at the time of rebuilding the city and temple, after  
 return from Babylon. But indeed it is a Psalm which  
 never be out of season, the design of its author being to  
 us the necessity of a dependence upon God and his bless-  
 n every work to which we set our hands. What is said  
 regard to an earthly house, city, and family, extendeth  
 o the spiritual house, city, and family of Christ, which  
 ow, what Jerusalem, the temple, and the people of Israel,  
 in old time.

*Except the Lord build the house, they labour in  
 bat build it: except the Lord keep the city, the  
 nan waketh but in vain.*

every undertaking, the blessing of God must  
 pany the labours of man, to render them  
 ial. No work can prosper without him, nor  
 y design miscarry under his favour and pro-  
 l, which are equally necessary to be obtained  
 : builder in time of peace, and by the soldier  
 e of war. But they, above all men, ought to  
 re the divine grace and benediction, who are  
 yed either in building or defending the spi-  
 house and city of God; especially as the  
 persons, like the Jews after the captivity, sur-  
 ed by enemies always ready to obstruct the

work, are often obliged to hold a sword in one hand, while they build with the other. Our own edification in faith and holiness must likewise be carried on by us in this attitude, by reason of the many temptations which are continually assailing us. It may also be remarked, that both Solomon and Zerubbabel had vainly laboured to construct the first or the second material temple, unless Jehovah himself had built the true house for the reception of his glory, that is to say, the temple of Christ's body, and, after it was fallen down, had reared it again by a resurrection from the dead.

2. *It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows : for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*

The Psalmist doth not, certainly, intend to say, that labour and diligence are vain, but that they are so, except the Lord be with the labourer : the business is not to be done by all the industry and pains, all the carking and caring in the world, without him ; whereas, if his aid be called in, if part of our time be spent in prayer, not the whole of it in prayerless toiling and moiling, our work will become easier, and go on better ; a solicitude and anxiety for its success and completion will no longer prey upon our minds by day, and break our rest at night ; we shall cheerfully fulfil our daily tasks, and then, with confidence and resignation, lay our heads upon our pillows, and God will 'give to his beloved' a sweet and undisturbed 'sleep,' which shall fit them to return every morning, with renewed vigour and alacrity, to their stated employments. This seemeth to be the import of the verse. An obscurity has been occa-

sioned in the translations, by rendering the adverb כן so; 'so he giveth his beloved sleep;' in which form, this last part of the verse will not connect with what goes before. But if כן be translated, like its kindred particle, אכן, 'surely' he giveth his beloved sleep;' or, as Dr. Hammond renders it, 'since he giveth his beloved sleep,' the difficulty will vanish, and the sense appear to be as above. Nor can we easily find a more profitable piece of instruction, with regard to the management of all our concerns, temporal and spiritual.

3. *Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*

The labours of mankind, first in building houses and cities, and then in guarding and securing their possessions, are undergone, not with a view to themselves alone, but to their families, which they would establish and perpetuate. The Psalmist, therefore, in the preceding verses, having taught men to expect a happy settlement only from the favour of Jehovah, now directs them to look up to him for the further blessing of a numerous and virtuous progeny. He can in a moment blast the most fruitful stock, or he can 'make the barren woman to keep house, and to become a joyful mother of children.' 'Lo, children are an heritage of Jehovah;' an heritage which he bestows on those who fear him; 'the fruit of the womb is a reward' conferred by him, where he sees it will be a blessing indeed, upon faithful and pious parents. St. Paul calls the converts made by his ministry his 'child-

<sup>1</sup> This is the second of the senses given to this particle by Noldius, who cites, in confirmation of it, 1 Sam. ix. 13; 1 Kings xx. 40.



ren; and all believers are the children of Christ the 'heritage' given him by his Father, the 'reward' of his righteous life, and meritorious death as it is written, 'I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance:' 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.' Psalm ii. 8; Is liii. 11.

4. *As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man so are children of the youth.*

Children, when well educated, are like so many 'arrows in the hand of a strong man,' ready wings with duty and love, to fly to the mark; polished and keen, to grace and maintain the cause of the parents, to defend them from hostile invasions, and instantly to repel every assailant. The apostles and first Christians were arrows in the hand of Messiah, with which he encountered his enemies and subdued the nations to the faith. When the splendour of their sanctity, the power of the miracles, and the efficacy of their preaching, they pierced the hearts of thousands and ten thousand what were they but 'arrows in the hand of the Mighty One?' And in this instance likewise it may truly be said, that no well-nurtured son of Christ and the church will hear his father dishonoured, or despise his mother when she is old.

5. *Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.*

In a house full of dutiful children consisteth the happiness of their parents, who then can never want friends; friends, that will at no time be 'ashamed,' but will at all times rejoice to appear

them, to meet their 'enemies' and accusers  
 at the gate,' or place of judgment; there to  
 answer any charge against them, to vindicate them  
 and their persons, their good name, or their pro-  
 perty. It is a glorious sight to behold children  
 standing forth in the defence of their parents.  
 A multitude of true believers consist the glory  
 of the Christian, and the riches of the church. How for-  
 were the primitive Christians to meet the ene-  
 mies of these their spiritual parents 'in the gate';  
 ready, in their cause, to speak openly, and  
 having witnessed a good confession, to die by the  
 sword of the executioner! Therefore shall they  
 not be ashamed at the judgment of the last day,  
 shall then stand with great boldness before the  
 face of such as have afflicted, persecuted, and tor-  
 mented them. For their heavenly Father will  
 be their Judge, and will own, in his turn, the  
 faithfulness of his dutiful children, who for his sake en-  
 dured tribulation, and loved not their lives unto  
 dishonour. Confusion shall overwhelm the accuser  
 and his brethren, with all the instruments of his  
 wrath; but glory, honour, and immortality shall  
 be given to the children of God.

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 PSALM CXXVIII.

JUDGMENT.—This Psalm containeth a promise made to  
 him who, 1. feared Jehovah, and walked in his ways, that he

c. Merrick observes, that the gate was sometimes the seat  
 of judgment, as well as the place of judicature. 'Then was war in  
 Jerusalem,' Judges, v. 8. He mentions a remarkable Chinese  
 proverb: "When a son is born into a family, a bow and arrow  
 are kept before the gate."

should be blessed, 2. in his person, and, 3, 4. in his f and that he should see the good of Jerusalem. The was, probably, sung at the marriages of the Israelites, a now a part of the matrimonial service among us. In is phetical and exalted sense, it hath respect to the person riage, family, and city of Messiah.

1. *Blessed is every one that feareth the L that walketh in his ways.*

Happiness belongeth not to the rich the po ful, and the prosperous, as such ; but in every and condition, blessed is the man that 'feared hovah,' that so feareth him as to obey him, an 'walk in his ways,' notwithstanding all the structions he may meet with from the world flesh, and the devil. Blessed above all the so men, and the author of blessing to them all, the man Christ Jesus, because above them all, for them all, he feared, he loved, and he obeye

2. *For thou shalt eat the labour of thine ha happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well thee.*

The person is here beautifully changed, an the man who feareth Jehovah is addressed an meration of those blessings which shall attend He is to 'eat the labour of his hands,' that is fruit, or returns of his labours. Hereby it is plied, that he is not to be idle, but to 'labour, he may eat ; that he is not to be niggardly, b 'eat,' when he has laboured ; that he is neith be unjust, by living upon the labours, nor ensl by depending upon the bounty of others, but t of 'his own' labours ; and that he, whose lab procure him a sustenance, hath enough to be ' sed' and happy. 'Happy shalt thou be, and it

ll with thee : ' every thing shall happen, which  
 eeth to be best for thee in this life, and (as saith  
 haldee paraphrast on the place) " it shall be  
 to thee in the world to come." The glory of  
 t, and the salvation of mankind, were the fruits  
 : actions and his sufferings in the days of his  
 ; so that, in the enjoyment of them, he doth  
 ore than ' eat of the labours of his hands ; or,  
 : the words of Isaiah, ' he seeth of the travail  
 : soul, and is satisfied.' Before he went hence,  
 ok comfort in the reflection, ' I have glorified  
 on the earth, I have finished the work which  
 gavest me to do.' John, xvii. 4. Happy shalt  
 be, O Christian, and it shall be well with thee,  
 thy latter end thou shalt be able to draw com-  
 rom the same consideration.

*Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the  
 of thine house : thy children like olive plants  
 l about thy table.*

arriage was ordained by God to complete the  
 ty of man in a state of innocence ; and the  
 diction of heaven will ever descend upon it,  
 : undertaken in ' the fear of the Lord.' The  
 a lowly plant, raised with tender care, be-  
 ng, by its luxuriance, its beauty, its fragrance,  
 its clusters, the ornament and glory of the  
 e to which it is joined, and by which it is sup-  
 d, forms the finest imaginable emblem of a  
 virtuous, and faithful wife. The olive-trees  
 ted by the inhabitants of the eastern countries  
 nd their tables, or banquetting-places in their  
 ens, ' to cheer the eye by their verdure, and to

This is Bishop Patrick's idea. The learned and ingenious  
 farmer, in his very valuable " Observations on divers Pas-  
 DL. III.

refresh the body by their cooling shade, do aptly and significantly set forth the pleasure parents feel, at the sight of a numerous and flourishing offspring. As marriage was from the beginning intended to represent the mystical union between Christ and his church, which union is spoken in matrimonial language, through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, we need extend our view, to behold, under the imagery of the vine and the olive-plants, the prolific spouse of the Messiah, and the children of peace assembled at the table of their heavenly Father. See *Isa. lxxx. 8*; *Rom. xi. 17*.

4. *Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed who feareth the Lord.*

Are temporal blessings, then, the reward of piety? They are not its only, nor chief reward, but often 'added,' even under the new dispensation, to those who 'first seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.' When they are withheld or withdrawn, it is for the security or increase of more valuable blessings which are spiritual. There are times, when father, mother, brethren, wife, children, and lands, must be given up for Christ's and the gospel's sake. But ample satisfaction is promised to be made to all who thus part with earthly relations and possessions. They are blessed like the church other fathers, mothers, brethren, children, &c. and at the resurrection they will

be raised up again, as *Scripture*," (vol. i. p. 197, 2d edit.) disapproves, as he says, "we find no such arbours in the Levant, nor tree very proper for the purpose." He thinks therefore the 'olive' refers to the 'children' only, and not to the 'olive tree.' Mr. Merrick, in his *Annotations*, produces some very good arguments on the side of Bishop Patrick.

all things,' Rev. xxi. 7, and brighter coronets  
 ry shall sparkle from their heads. The Scrip-  
 show us the servants of God in every state  
 condition ; we view them rich and poor, ho-  
 rd and despised, sick and in health, married  
 single, childless and otherwise, in prosperity  
 n adversity ; to teach us, that all things work  
 her for good to them who love God : so that  
 believer hath comfort always. If temporal  
 ngs be granted him, he accepteth them as  
 ws of those which are eternal ; if they are  
 d, he remembereth that they are only shadows,  
 re therefore denied, that he may fix his thoughts  
 ffections more firmly on the substance.

*The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion : and  
 shalt see the good of Jerusalem, all the days of  
 fe. 6. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's chil-  
 and peace upon Israel.*

ery true Israelite rejoiceth in the prosperity  
 on ; a blessing upon the church diffuseth itself  
 the members thereof ; and the good of Jeru-  
 1, with peace upon Israel, is all the good we  
 lesire to see upon earth. Hereafter we shall  
 reater things than these. Jehovah from the  
 nly Zion will bless us with the vision of his  
 ortal glory ; we shall see the good of the new  
 salem, the wealth, beauty, and majesty of that  
 city ; we shall see the generations of the faith-  
 alking in the light of it ; with that everlasting  
 e and rest which remain for the Israel of God.  
 e are the blessings promised to Messiah, and  
 s seed, for evermore.

## PSALM CXXIX.

**ARGUMENT.**—In the former part of this Psalm. church declareth herself to have been often assailed by her enemies, but as often rescued and preserved by Jehovah; in the latter part of it, 5—8. she premises a miserable end of all those who hate Zion.

*1. Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say: 2. Many a time they afflicted me from my youth: yet they prevailed against me.*

Affliction is nothing new to the people of God. Many a time have the righteous been under affliction, from the hour when Cain rose up against his brother Abel, to this day. Like the bush which Moses beheld in the desert, the church hath been 'consumed with fire,' but is not yet 'consumed;' on the same reason, because God is in the midst of her. He who took our nature upon him, 'was afflicted from his youth,' but his enemies prevailed not finally against him. And it is remarkable, that what God spake, by his prophets concerning Israel, 'When Israel was a child I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.' St. Matthew applied to Christ; 'Joseph took a young child and his mother by night, and came into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, Out of Egypt have I called my son.'

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesia jam inde ab initio in Abel, in Enoch, in Abraham, in Lot, in Egyptiâ servitute, in Moyse, et in gravibus perpassa inimicos: dicit illa quidem sæpe a jure fuisse oppugnatam; nihilo tamen secius pervenisse ad libertatem: ac ne in senectute quidem opprimi posse. Victus enī habebat, vicit qui sufferebat. Bossuet.

l. 14; Hos. xi. 1. The truth is, that there subsisted between Christ and the church an union like that between the head and the members of the same body; they are therefore called by the same name, Israel, and what is said concerning one, frequently admitteth of an application to the other. He became like us by taking our nature, and we become like him by receiving his grace. Our sufferings are accounted as his; and his righteousness spoken of as ours.

3. *The plowers plowed upon my back; they made long their furrows.* 4. *The Lord is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.*

The former of these two verses expresseth a state of great affliction, the latter, a deliverance from that state. The word *חרש*, which signifies to dig, or cut the ground, and so, to plow, is also used simply for cutting, carving, or graving; see Exod. xxxv. 33; Jer. xvii. 1. Being here applied to the back of captives, and cords having been the instruments of it, in all reason it is to be understood of scourging, which cuts, and, as it were, digs, and plows, and makes furrows in the flesh; and the longer the cord of the scourges are, the longer are the wounds and furrows. For our sakes he who knew no sin 'gave his back to the smiters,' Isa. l. 6; and permitted those 'plowers to make long their furrows upon it.' But 'the righteous Lord cut asunder the cords of the wicked;' vengeance overtook the wretched instruments of his sufferings; and the persecutors of his servants shall perish in like manner, as the Psalmist proceedeth to assure us in the verses following.

5. *Let them all, or, they all shall, be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.*



Since the ways of God are equal, the destruction which hath lighted on former persecutors of the church affordeth an assurance, that all in every age, who hate Zion, shall, at the day of final retribution, if not before that day, feel the weight of his arm, who is the Saviour, the King, and the God of Zion.

6. *Let them, or, they shall, be as the grass upon the house-tops, which withereth afore it groweth up: Heb. is pulled up.<sup>1</sup> Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand: nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.*  
 8. *Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the Lord be upon you: we bless you in the name of the Lord.*

The transient prosperity of mortal man is often in sacred writ compared to grass, the history of which is contained in these few words, 'It cometh up, and is cut down.' But here the comparison is carried still further. Not the common grass in the field, but 'grass growing on the house-tops,' is selected to convey the idea of bad men; grass, which having no depth of earth, into which it may strike its roots, doth not wait the hand of the gatherer, but 'withereth' even 'before it is plucked up.' And then, so thin, so wretched, and so unprofitable is the crop, that none are employed to collect and carry it in; none to whom passengers might address those acclamations and salutations, customary at such times, as 'The Lord be with you, bless you,' &c. Ruth, ii. 4. Thus, while the felicity of Zion's children is rooted and grounded in Christ,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Harmer takes the idea of the Psalmist to be, 'Which withereth before it unsheaths its ear.' Observ. 11, 463.

that of her enemies hath no foundation at all. While the church subsisteth from generation to generation, the kingdoms and empires, that have persecuted her, fade and wither away of themselves. And at the general harvest of the world, when the righteous shall be carried by angels, with joyful acclamations, into the mansions prepared for them above, the wicked, unregarded by the heavenly reapers, and unblessed by all, shall become fuel for a fire that goeth not out; resembling, in this their sad end, likewise, that worthless grass, 'which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.'

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 PSALM CXXX.

**ARGUMENT.**—This is the sixth of those which are styled "Penitential Psalms." It is calculated for the use of the church, or any member thereof; and containeth, 1, 2. a complaint of great distress; 3. a confession of man's sinfulness; 4—8. an act of faith in the divine mercy, and the promised redemption.

1. *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.*
2. *Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.*

From the depth of sin, and the misery occasioned by sin, the penitent, like another Jonas, entombed in the whale's belly, and surrounded by all the waves of the ocean, crieth unto God for help and salvation. Fervent prayer will find its way, through every obstruction, to the ears of him who sitteth upon his holy hill. And may not the bodies of the faithful, buried in the dust, be said to cry, out of the depths of the grave, for a joyful resurrection, ac-

cording to the promise and the pattern of ( who, after three days, came forth from the of the earth, as Jonas did from the belly of whale?

3. *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O who shall stand?*

A reason is here urged, why God should and pardon the suppliant, namely, because, v accurately to note the offences of the best me to produce them in judgment against the offe no man could stand in that judgment, but the race of Adam must continue to eternity und dominion of sin and death; which a graciou merciful God will not permit to be the case. accordingly declared in the next verse, that sures had been taken to prevent so deplorable catastrophe.

4. *But there is forgiveness with thee, that mayest be feared.*

True repentance is founded upon the se our own wretchedness, and faith in the mercy. . Without the former, we should neve for pardon and grace; without the latter, we despair of finding them. The Psalmist, the having in the three preceding verses express one, now maketh profession of the other. ‘ is forgiveness with thee;’ thou wilt not ‘ma quities,’ or leave us to the rigours of strict j but thou hast devised means that we perish i ever: thou hast provided an atonement, a virtue of that atonement, the sinner may pardon; he need not, therefore, reject thy s and cast himself away in despair, but is encou

to serve thee acceptably through faith, with godly fear: 'there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' Or the meaning may be, Thou forgivest man, that so, being restored to thy favour, and endued with thy grace, he may thenceforth fear, or serve thee, as it becomes one who hath obtained mercy to do.

*5. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. 6. My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.*

The repetitions here do beautifully express that ardent desire which the contrite soul hath for the salvation of God. Dr. Hammond seemeth to have given the true construction of ver. 6, נַפְשִׁי לַאֲדֹנָי, "My soul to the Lord, that is, riseth, cometh, or hasteneth to the Lord, מִשְׁחָרִים לְבֹקֶר from the morning watches, that is, from the time when they hasten to their watches, in other words, the guards every morning that hasten to their watches, are not earlier than I am in my daily addresses to God. Who these watches or guards of the morning are, the Chaldee hath best expressed: They that observe the morning watches, that they may offer their morning oblation, that is, the priests which in their turns officiated; or rather, some officers of theirs, which were peculiarly appointed from a tower to expect the first appearance of break of day." With such earnestness did the ancient church expect the appearance of that day-spring from on high, which was, in the fulness of time, to visit the world. With equal earnestness have the faithful since looked out for the dawning of that

last morning, which is to abolish sin, and put an end to sorrow.

7. *Let Israel hope in the Lord : for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.*  
8. *And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities, or, sins.*

These verses are perfectly evangelical. The church of Israel was exhorted to 'hope' in Jehovah, because with him there was 'mercy, and plenteous redemption.' And of what nature was that redemption? A redemption from sin; 'he shall redeem Israel from all his sins;' consequently, from all trouble and misery, which are but the effects of sin, and will cease when their cause shall be finally taken away. Now what is this, but the gospel itself? or where is the difference between this of the Psalmist, 'he shall redeem Israel from all his sins,' and that of the Evangelist, 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins?' Matt. i. 21. The Israel of God, or church universal, 'hoping' in the same 'mercy' and the same 'plenteous redemption,' expecteth the full accomplishment of this gracious promise, at the second advent of her Saviour, when the penalty of sin shall be taken off, and death be swallowed up in victory.

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### PSALM CXXXI.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm containeth, 1, 2. a description of true humility, and resignation to the will of God, with, 3 an exhortation to the practice thereof. It is most probably a Psalm of David, and is eminently applicable to Messiah, in

his state of humiliation on earth. Happy would it be for the world, if all his disciples could imbibe the spirit of this short but lovely Psalm, and copy after the example which it setteth before them.

1. *Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.*

Pride beginneth in the 'heart,' and discovereth itself in the 'eyes,' the countenance, and the carriage; thinking nothing 'too high for it,' it is always aiming at still 'great matters,' scheming to be at the top of earthly grandeur; and, when there, restless because it can go no further. Of this disposition the Son of David, like his father and representative of old, was by his enemies affirmed to be; he was accused of affecting the sovereignty, and therefore hunted and persecuted even to the death. But how truly do these words of the Psalmist delineate his real character! He was not 'haughty,' but 'meek and lowly in heart;' his 'eyes' were not 'lofty,' but kindly regarded the meanest object that presented itself to them; he looked not to 'great matters,' and 'high things,' but chose to be, and to be esteemed, the least and lowest of all.

2. *Surely I have behaved, or, subdued, and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.*

A child newly weaned mourneth because of the favourite aliment which is withdrawn from him, but depending absolutely on the mother for every thing, learneth to acquiesce in her treatment of him, and quietly to accept what it shall please her

to give. Such was the humble resignation of the Lamb of God to the will of his heavenly Father, under the severest dispensations, when even the divine presence, and that support which it afforded, seemed to have been withdrawn: 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!' Who, then, can expect to enter into the kingdom of heaven 'except he be converted, and become as a little child?' Matt. xviii. 3.

3. *Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.*

After the example, therefore, of the King of Israel, who thus demeaned himself in his afflictions, lowly, contented, and resigned, casting all his care upon the Father who cared for him, and patiently waiting his time for deliverance and salvation; after this their example and pattern, let his faithful people hope and trust, not in themselves, their wisdom, or their power, but in Jehovah alone, who will not fail to exalt them, as he hath already exalted their Redeemer, if they do but follow his steps.

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*Twenty-eighth Day.—Morning Prayer.*

PSALM CXXXII.

ARGUMENT.—This is one of the proper Psalms, which the church hath appointed to be used on Christmas-day. It containeth, 1—5. a petition that Jehovah would be mindful of the zeal shown by his servant David, in preparing a place for his habitation; 6. the exultation of the faithful upon hearing the glad tidings, that God would dwell among them; and 7. their resolution to worship at the place which he had chosen

for that purpose ; 8—10. an address to Jehovah, used by Solomon at the dedication of the temple, whence some have thought him to have been the author of the Psalm ; 11—18. the substance of God's promises made to David and to his seed. The whole Psalm is perfectly well adapted to the festival of the incarnation, as the following comment will, it is hoped, abundantly demonstrate.

1. *Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions :*

Israel beseecheth Jehovah to be mindful of those sorrows and sufferings which had been undergone by his servant David, ere he attained to the throne, and established the ancient church in the beauty of holiness. That God would 'remember' the far greater 'afflictions' sustained for our sake by Messiah in the days of his humiliation, when, through much tribulation, he accomplished our redemption, and entered into his glory, is the petition preferred, in these words, by us Christians.

2. *How he swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob ;* 3. *Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed ;* 4. *I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids,* 5. *Until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.*

In all circumstances and situations, David was solicitous for the tabernacle and service of God. Of the oath and vow here mentioned, we have, indeed, no account in the sacred history ; but we read, 2 Sam. vii. 2, of the uneasiness which he expressed to Nathan the prophet, at the thought of his dwelling in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God dwelt only within the curtains of a tent. Nay, we find, by 1 Chron. xvi. 43, that he did not bless, and consequently did not inhabit his own house,



until he had brought the ark to Zion, where the temple was afterwards erected. He could take neither pleasure nor rest, until a place was prepared for the residence of Jehovah in the midst of his people; and from thenceforth he gave himself, with unwearied diligence, to lay in a plentiful store of the most costly materials, silver, gold, and precious stones, which were employed by his son and successor Solomon, in constructing the magnificent and mystic edifice. Thus, in the covenant of grace, did the Son of God engage not to take possession of his heavenly palace, nor to enter into his eternal rest, until he had prepared upon the earth a place for the residence of the Lord; a building framed of materials more precious than gold and silver, more bright and beautiful than rubies, emeralds, and diamonds. All this was planned and executed by one and the same person, who first suffered in meekness and patience, like David, then reigned in glory and peace, like Solomon. The believer should spare no pains, no time, no thought, to find out and prepare in his heart an habitation for the God of Jacob, since our Lord hath graciously vouchsafed to make this general promise to us all, 'If a man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' John, xiv. 23.

*6. Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood.*

In other words, as Bishop Patrick hath paraphrased this verse, 'And now, behold, the Lord himself, to our great joy, hath told us the very place where he will fix his habitation,' 1 Chron.

xxi. 18, 26, in the territory of Bethlehem Ephrata,<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxxv. 13, 19, in the fields of that forest, where the angel stood and directed David to build an altar to the Lord : ' 1 Chron. xxi. 18. xxii. 1. Bethlehem Ephratah was the city of David ; it was likewise the city wherein the Son of David was born, as the prophet Micah hath foretold : ' And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the cities of Judah, for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel,' Micah, v. 2, cited by the chief priests and scribes to Herod, Matt. ii. 6. Christians, as well as Jews, may therefore say, and upon the festival of Christ's nativity, using this Psalm, they do say, 'Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah : ' for there the angel first proclaimed the news of the incarnation to the shepherds : ' Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people ; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord : ' Luke, ii. 10. There was ' found ' the true tabernacle and temple, not made with hands, the place for Jehovah, the habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.'

*7. We will go into his tabernacles : we will worship at his footstool.*

If this were the resolution of Israelites, who saw the incarnation only in type and figure, how much more ought it to be ours, who live since the accomplishment of that which was foreshown ; since the Word, made flesh, hath dwelt upon the earth, and

<sup>1</sup> Jerusalem, as Mr. Merrick observes from Geierus, being situated not far from Bethlehem, might be comprehended in the region of Ephrata ; or באפרתח, may be rendered ' near Ephrata.'

the church hath been erected among the  
 If they worshipped the God of Israel, w  
 dwelt in the holy of holies between the cl  
 shall not we worship the same divine pers  
 though ascended up on high above all  
 yet hath assured us, that where two or t  
 gathered together in his name, there is h  
 midst of them ?

8. *Arise, O Lord, into thy rest ; thou,  
 ark of thy strength.*

When the ark marched before the chi  
 Israel to find out a resting-place, it is 1  
 Numb. x. 35, 36, that Moses said, ‘ Rise u  
 vah, and let thine enemies be scattered,  
 them that hate thee flee before thee ;’ ar  
 it rested, he said, ‘ Return, or bring b  
 many thousands of Israel.’ The verse 1  
 was used, with the two succeeding ve  
 Solomon, as the conclusion of his praye  
 dedication of the temple, 2 Chron. vi. 4  
 purport of the petition, therefore, was,  
 presence of Jehovah might rest upon Z  
 dwell in the house prepared for it, as t  
 presence hath since dwelt in Christ, and  
 with the Christian church to the end of th

9. *Let thy priests be clothed with righte  
 and let thy saints shout with joy.*

The ark being placed in the temple, 1  
 next made for the ministers of religion, 1  
 might, through grace, be invested with ri  
 ness as with a garment, and be both cov  
 adorned with a robe of inviolable sancti  
 spiritual joy might fill their hearts, and bre

in songs of praise to the Lord God of Israel. Let not those who have obtained the evangelical priesthood, be exceeded by the sons of Levi, in holiness and alacrity.

10. *For thy servant David's sake, turn not away the face of thine anointed.*

Solomon beseecheth God, for the sake of his favourite servant David, and the promises made to him and his seed, that he would not deny the request of David's son, now 'anointed' to be king over Israel, and, by so doing confound, put him to shame, or 'turn away his face.' That this is the meaning of the phrase is plain from 1 Kings, ii. 16, where Adonijah says to Bathsheba, 'And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not;' in the Hebrew, 'turn not away my face.' A Christian asketh nothing but in the name, and for the sake of the Son of David, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom all the promises are yea and amen, and in whom whosoever believeth shall never be confounded, or denied that which is really good and profitable for him to receive.

11. *The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it: Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.*

That this is a prophecy of Messiah we have the authority of St. Peter to say, Acts, ii. 30: 'David, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne,' &c. This promise to David occurs, 2 Sam. vii. 12, and hath a twofold sense, relating to Solomon in type and shadow,

to Christ in truth and substance. See more Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4.

*12. If thy children will keep my covenant and testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.*

The promises of God to Christ are absolute; to his 'children,' as well as those of David, are conditional; so that our interest in them pendeth on our faith, our obedience, our perseverance. 'Behold,' saith St. Paul, 'the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in goodness; otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off.' Rom. xi. 22.

*13. For the Lord hath chosen Zion: he hath desired it for his habitation. 14. This is my rest ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.*

How ineffable is the love of God to man, that he should use such expressions as these concerning his church! He is pleased to say, that it is his desire to dwell with us; yet how little do we deserve to dwell with him! In Zion he fixed his abode, and there continued, till the iniquities of Israel provoked him to forsake his holy mount, and to give up Jerusalem for a prey to the spoiler. Since that time, his tabernacle has been removed into the possession of the Gentiles. Forsake not this thy new Zion, O God, and deliver us not, O people, in like manner, sinful as we are, into the hands of the enemy and the avenger.

*15. I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. 16. I will also ch*

*er priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout  
loud for joy.*

That city in which the King of heaven deigns to  
place his throne, can want no manner of thing that  
is good. There will be always plenty of provision  
for the body and for the soul. The poor will be  
satisfied with bread, and to the poor in spirit will  
be given the bread of eternal life. Salvation will  
be appointed for a wall and a bulwark around the  
city and the temple; joy and gladness shall be  
heard within, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.  
What a dreadful reverse of all this do we  
hold in the present state of the once glorious,  
now desolated, Jerusalem! Let not any Christian  
church, after what has happened to that city,  
be high-minded, but let all fear.

*17. There will I make the horn of David to bud:  
I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.*

Bishop Patrick hath well paraphrased this verse:  
"There, namely, in Jerusalem, will I make the  
royal power and majesty of David to put forth  
itself afresh in his royal successors: no sooner  
shall one be extinguished, but another shall shine  
with such splendour as shall give a lustre to the  
name of that anointed servant of mine, till the  
great prince, the Messiah, appear;" then will the  
ornament of salvation be raised up in the house of  
David, to subdue the empires of the world, and to  
conquer all opposition; then shall the branch of  
Jehovah bud into beauty and glory upon the earth;  
then shall the lamp of Israel become a sun of  
righteousness, burning and shining with lustre in-  
extinguishable, to all eternity. That this verse

doth mystically refer to Christ, the Jews (as Dr. Hammond has observed. So Saadia, "The lamp is the king, which illuminates the nations:" and Kimchi, "The horn of David the Messiah."

18. *His enemies will I clothe with shame, but upon himself shall his crown flourish.*

It is here predicted, that God would bring to nothing every design formed to the house of David, until King Messiah arise out of it, to sit upon the throne of his In him all the promises centre, and the kingdom is established for ever: 'His enemies,' who have him to reign over them, shall, at the last be 'clothed with shame,' and everlasting confusion; 'but upon himself shall his crown flourish' heaven and earth with the brightness of its

### PSALM CXXXIII.

ARGUMENT.—This short but pleasing Psalm was either to recommend unity among the tribes of Israel, or to celebrate it when it had taken place. Bishop Patrick observes, that "it was as fitly used by the first Christians to express their joy for the blessed union of Jews and Gentiles, and may now serve the uses of all Christian societies, whose happiness lies in holy peace and concord. It contains a rapturous exclamation on the comforts and advantages of holy union, which, 2, 3. are illustrated by the two exquisites of the holy anointing oil and of dew.

1. *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.*

Many things are good which are not p

and many pleasant which are not good. But unity among brethren, whether civil or religious, is productive both of profit and pleasure. Of profit, because therein consisteth the welfare and security of every society; of pleasure, because mutual love is the source of delight, and the happiness of one becomes, in that case, the happiness of all. It is unity alone which gives beauty as well as strength to the state; which renders the church, at the same time, 'fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners.' Cant. vi. 10.

2. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments; 3. As the dew of Hermon,<sup>1</sup> and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

"Unity, beginning in the prince and diffused through the people, is here illustrated," saith Doctor Delany, "by two images, the most apt and beautiful that ever were imagined. Kingdoms are considered as bodies politic, of which the king is the head, and the people, in their several ranks and orders, the parts and members. A spirit of union beginning upon the prince, whose person is sacred, is like oil poured upon the head of Aaron, which naturally descends, and spreads itself over all the parts of the body, and diffuses beauty and fragrance over the whole, reaching even to the

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Lowth seemeth fully to have justified our translators in supplying the ellipsis as they have done, and thereby removing the absurdity of making the dew of Hermon, a mountain on one side of Jordan, towards the eastern extremity of Canaan, descend on the mountain of Zion, which was situated on the other side of Jordan, at Jerusalem.



skirts of the garment. Oil is, without question, the finest emblem of union that ever was conceived. It is a substance consisting of very small particles which yet, by their mutual adhesion, constitute a uniform, well united, and useful body. The same oil carries the idea and the advantage of union further; which being extracted from various species yet made up one well cohering and more valuable compound. The next image carries the exhortation to union, and the advantages of it, to a higher. Hermon was the general name of a mountain, comprehending many lesser and lesser hills, under the surround of a greater. Union to any nation is the gift of God; and therefore union among brethren, beginning from the king, is like the dew of heaven, which falling first upon the higher summit of Hermon, (refreshing and enlivening wherever it falls,) naturally descends to Zion lower; and thence even to the humble valleys. Zion was the centre of union to all the tribes; there God himself had promised his people rest, and deliverance from their enemies; which, however, were of no value without union and harmony among themselves." <sup>1</sup> Thus far this learned and pious author whose explanation of the Psalmist's imagery, descriptive of civil unity in the state, is so just and elegant that I could not forbear transcribing this passage at length. It only remains to be added that these divine pictures receive an additional beauty, and the colouring is much heightened when their being viewed in another light, as representations of spiritual unity in the church. The oil of heavenly love was that oil of gladness which

<sup>1</sup> Life of King David, vol. iii. p. 204.

Jehovah poured without measure on him who is the high-priest and head of his church. Insinuating and healing, comforting and exhilarating, it is diffused from him over his body mystical, even down to the least and lowest members; 'of his fulness have we all received;' and, as it is said of Mary's box of spikenard in the Gospel, 'the house is filled with the odour of the ointment.' Nor did the dew of heaven, in time of drought, ever prove more refreshing and beneficial to the mountains of Judah, than are the influences of grace, when descending in soft silence from above upon the church; in the union and communion of which God hath 'commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.' O, come the day when division shall cease, and enmity be done away; when the tribes of the spiritual Israel shall be united in a bond of eternal charity, under the true David, in the Jerusalem which is above; and saints and angels shall sing this lovely Psalm together!

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PSALM CXXXIV.

ARGUMENT.—With this Psalm Christians in the church, like the Levites of old in the temple, 1, 2. call upon each other to bless God, and 3. upon God to bless them all.

1. *Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord.* 2. *Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord.*

The first word in this verse, 'Behold,' seemeth to point at the reasons which the priests in the temple had to bless Jehovah; as if it had been

said, Behold, the house of God is built, the holy services are appointed, and the Lord hath given you rest from your enemies, that you may serve him acceptably; set about it, therefore, with gratitude and alacrity. We read, 1 Chron. ix. 33, that the Levitical singers were 'employed in their work day and night;' to the end, doubtless, that the earthly sanctuary might bear some resemblance of that above, where, St. John tells us, the redeemed 'are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in the temple.' Rev. vii. 16. Christians are the redeemed of the Lord, redeemed from the guilt and dominion of sin, delivered out of the hands of their enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, that they may become the servants of Christ. He hath built his church, and in it he wills that men pray, lifting up holy hands, and that they offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving. 'Behold,' therefore, 'bless the Lord Jesus, all ye servants of his;' bless him in the cheerful and busy hours of day; bless him in the solemn and peaceful watches of the night; making melody, even then, in your hearts at least, if not with your voices. The pious Mr. Nicholas Farrer exhibited, in the last century, an instance of a Protestant family, in which a constant course of psalmody was appointed, and so strictly kept up, that through the whole four and twenty hours of day and night, there was no portion of time, when some of the members were not employed in performing that most pleasant part of duty and devotion. The reader may see the curious life of this extraordinary person, as drawn up by Dr. Turner, Bishop of Ely, in the Christian Magazine, vol. ii. p. 356.

3. *The Lord that made heaven and earth, bless thee out of Zion.*

The two preceding verses, as Mr. Mudge observes, seem directed to the priests of the temple, by some person, probably of consequence, come up to pay his devotion. This third verse is therefore returned, as from the priests. And thus it is that prayer and praise, which by grace are caused to ascend from our hearts to God, will certainly return in the benedictions of heaven upon our souls and bodies, our persons and our families, our church and our country, like the vapours, which, exhaled by the warmth of the sun from the bowels of the earth, mount upwards into the air, but soon fall again in fruitful showers, causing the little hills to rejoice, and the valleys to laugh and sing.

## PSALM CXXXV.

**ARGUMENT.**—In this Psalm, 1, 2. the servants of Jehovah are exhorted to praise him, 3. on account of his goodness; of the pleasure to be found in the employment; 4. of the peculiar mercies shown to Israel; 5. of his infinite superiority over the gods of the nations, manifested, 6, 7. in the works of creation, 8—14. in his dealings with the church, and with her adversaries. 15—18. The folly of idolatry, and of those who practise it, is described; and 19—21. Israel is again stirred up to praise Jehovah.

1. *Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the name of the Lord: praise him, O ye servants of the Lord; 2. Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God. 3. Praise the Lord; for the Lord is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.*

All the servants of God, they, more especially, who minister in the temple, are repeatedly, as in the foregoing Psalm, excited to praise their blessed Master. Two reasons are assigned why they should do this. First, the goodness of that Master, and secondly, the pleasantness of the employment. The latter of these reasons hath a natural and necessary dependence on the former. A sense of the divine mercy will tune our hearts and voices to praise. We, who are upon earth, often find ourselves indisposed for the duty of thanksgiving, because the concerns of the body, the cares and pleasures of life, extinguish, for a time, this sense in us, until grace, prayer, and meditation render it again lively and active. In the inhabitants of heaven, who behold God without the veil of matter interposed, it is always so; and therefore they rest not day or night from singing hallelujahs, nor cease one moment to rejoice in God their Saviour.

*4. For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure. 5. For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.*

A third reason why the children of Israel should praise the name of Jehovah, was the circumstance of their having been selected from among the nations to be his church, to receive the law and the promises, to have his presence residing in the midst of them, and to be the guardians of the true faith and worship. And a fourth reason, was the superiority of Jehovah their God over the gods of the heathen, and consequently over those who worshipped them; from whence followed this comfortable inference, that he was able to protect and

to defend his people against every enemy that had evil will to Zion. Shall not we Christians, then, praise the same gracious Lord, who hath chosen us out of the world, who hath given unto us his gospel, who dwelleth in us by his Spirit, and who, by that Spirit, maketh us more than conquerors over our spiritual adversaries ?

6. *Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.*

The pre-eminence of Jehovah above the gods of the nations is evinced by this consideration, that he, at the beginning, created and formed those powers of nature, whose operations in the heavens, the earth, and the waters, led the heathen world, after it had lost the knowledge of the Creator, to adore the creature as independent. Let us praise him, who, in the intellectual as in the material world, is Lord and King ; who is obeyed by the angels in heaven, served by the church upon earth, and feared by the spirits imprisoned in deep places beneath.

7. *He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth : he maketh lightnings for the rain ; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures.*

They who in old time paid their devotions to the elements, imagined those elements to be capable of giving or withholding rain at pleasure. Therefore we find the prophet Jeremiah reclaiming that power to Jehovah, as the God who made and governed the world : ‘ Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain ? or can the heavens give showers ? Art thou not he, O Jehovah our God ? Therefore we will wait upon thee :

for thou hast made all these things.' Jer. xiv. 22. Among the Greeks and Romans we meet with a Jupiter possessed of the thunder and the lightning, and an Æolus ruling over the winds. The Psalmist teacheth us to restore the celestial artillery to its rightful owner. Jehovah, the God of Israel, and the Creator of the universe, contrived the wonderful machinery of light and air, by which vapours are raised from the earth, compacted into clouds, and distilled in rain. At his command the winds are suddenly in motion, and as suddenly at rest again; we hear the sound, but cannot tell whence they come, or whither they go; as if they were taken from secret storehouses of the Almighty, and then laid up till their service was required again. The same idea God himself is pleased to give us in the book of Job, where he describeth the instruments of his power, as so many weapons of war in the arsenal of a mighty prince: 'Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth? Who hath divided a water-course for the overflowing of waters? or a way for the lightning of thunder, to cause it to rain on the earth?' Job, xxxviii. 22, &c. It is a great instance of the divine wisdom and goodness, that lightning should be accompanied by rain, to soften its rage, and prevent its mischievous effects. Thus, in the midst of judgment, does God remember mercy. The threatenings in his word against sinners are like lightning; they would blast and scorch us up, were it not for his promises made in the same

word to penitents, which, as a gracious rain, turn aside their fury, refreshing and comforting our affrighted spirits.

8. *Who smote the first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast.* 9. *Who sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.*

Egypt was the theatre of the grand contest between the God of Israel and the gods of the heathen. The superiority of the former over the latter was shown in every possible way by the miracles of Moses, which demonstrated all the powers of nature to be under the dominion of Jehovah, and to act at his command; so that, instead of being able to protect, they were made to torment and destroy their deluded votaries. See more on Psalm lxxviii. 44, &c. The objects of a man's sin frequently become, in the end, the instruments of his punishment.

10. *Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings; 11. Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan: 12. And gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people.*

The victories gained by Israel over Sihon and Og, in their passage to Canaan, and afterwards over the idolatrous kings of that country, are more proofs of the same point. For Israel therefore conquered, because Jehovah fought for them, and put them in possession of that good land, when the iniquity of its old inhabitants was full, and cried to heaven for vengeance. The enemies we have to encounter in our way to the promised inheritance,



will also, if vigorously opposed, fall before 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, the violent take it by force.' But it is God fighteth for us, and with us, who giveth us the tory, and putteth us in possession, through Lord Jesus Christ.

13. *Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever ; thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations. For the Lord will judge his people, and he will pent himself concerning his servants.*

By the destruction of Pharaoh, with his Egyptians, and by the battles and victories of Joshua much more, by the overthrow of the spiritual Pharaoh, with his infernal host, and by the battles and victories of the true Joshua ; Jehovah hath got him glory, and his name is magnified in church from age to age. The people whom he hath redeemed, may, indeed, for the chastising of their iniquities, be sometimes delivered into hands of their enemies, and oppressed by them. But it is only to show them their transgressions and lead them to repentance. When this effect is wrought, he is always ready to 'judge them, plead and avenge their cause ; he 'repenteth' of the evil, and averteth it ; he is entreated for them, and becometh gracious to his servants.

15. *The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. 16. They have mouths, they speak not ; eyes have they, but they see not. 17. They have ears, but they hear not ; neither is there any breath in their mouths. 18. They make them as like unto them : so is every one that trusteth in them.*

In these verses is set forth the difference between the God of Israel and the idols of the nations, as also between the worshippers of each; all tending to confirm the truth of what was asserted, ver. 5: 'I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.' As the same words occur, Psalm cxv. 4, &c. the reader is referred thither for the explanation of them.

19. *Bless the Lord, O house of Israel: bless the Lord, O house of Aaron:* 20. *Bless the Lord, O house of Levi: ye that fear the Lord, bless the Lord.* 21. *Blessed be the Lord out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.*

He who proved himself superior to the objects of ancient idolatry, is no less superior to every object on which deluded man can place his affections. The Lord gave, and the Lord will take them away. Let 'the house of Israel,' therefore, and 'the sons of 'Aaron,' the church and the ministers thereof, let all who 'fear the Lord,' bless and praise his holy name in the temple here below, until they shall be admitted to do it for evermore, in that which is above.

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*Twenty-eighth Day.—Evening Prayer.*

### PSALM CXXXVI.

ARGUMENT.—This is a delightful hymn of praise and thanksgiving to Jehovah, 1—3. God of gods and Lord of lords, for the wonders, 4—9. of creation, 10—26. of providence, and grace; which were probably celebrated in due order by one half of the choir, while the other half, or perhaps the whole in full chorus, took up the burden of each verse, 'For his

mercy endureth for ever!" a form of acknowledgment, Patrick observes, prescribed by David, 1 Chron. xvi used continually in the divine service; a form high for creatures, and sinful creatures to use, whose greatness it is now, and will be for ever, to magnify the loving-kindness of their God.

1. *O give thanks unto the Lord; for he*  
*for his mercy endureth for ever.* 2. *O give*  
*unto the God of gods: for his mercy endu*  
*ever.* 3. *O give thanks to the Lord of lords:*  
*mercy endureth for ever.*

We are called upon to praise Jehovah, for his own essential attributes; then, for the use of those attributes in his works. The attributes here mentioned are those of 'goodness,' 'power;' the one renders him willing, the other able to save; and what can we desire more than that he should continue to be so? Of this we are assured, by contemplating the unchangeableness of his nature. His disposition alter not, and his kingdom none can take from him: his mercy endureth for ever.

4. *To him who alone doeth great wonders:*  
*mercy endureth for ever.*

All the works of God are 'wonderful' and 'mighty' in him 'alone' to have been their author. The established course of the world is, in reality, no more admirable than are those extraordinary interpositions of omnipotence, whereby it hath been sometimes interrupted and suspended; though the latter, on account of their novelty, are apt to affect us more than the former doth, which is ever before our eyes and therefore less regarded by us. How much more should those for whom the wonders of creation,

nce, and redemption have been wrought, think  
ne of them worthy their attention ! Angels ad-  
re and adore, where man will not deign to cast  
eye, or employ a thought.

*5. To him that by wisdom made the heavens : for  
his mercy endureth for ever. 6. To him that  
etched out the earth above the waters : for his  
mercy endureth for ever.*

The heavens above and the earth beneath de-  
clare the wisdom of their great Maker, and proclaim  
loud, to an intelligent ear, the divinity of the being  
that formed them. The heavens display the love of  
God to man ; the earth teaches the duty of man  
to God. Heaven is glorious and gracious, earth  
fertile and fruitful. The bright and ample cir-  
cumference of heaven, the variegated surface of the  
earth, and the profusion of good things that distin-  
guish the seasons, contaminated as they all have  
been by man's transgression, even now yield a pros-  
pect which annihilates all human grandeur. What  
can we, then, are we to frame of those new heavens  
and earth, from which sin and corruption are ex-  
cluded, and where righteousness hath fixed her  
eternal throne ?

*7. To him that made great lights : for his mercy  
endureth for ever : 8. The sun to rule by day : for  
his mercy endureth for ever. 9. The moon and stars  
to rule by night : for his mercy endureth for ever.*

Light is the life and soul of the universe, the  
most noble emblem of the power and glory of God,  
who in the night season leaves not himself without  
witness, but gives us some portion of that light re-  
ceived, which by day we behold flowing from its

great foundation in the heart of heaven. Thy church and thy saints, O Lord, 'are the moon and the stars,' which by the communication of doctrine and the splendour of example, guide our feet, while we travel on in the night that hath overtaken us waiting for the dawn of everlasting day. Then we shall behold thy glory, and see thee as thou art.

10. *To him that smote Egypt in their first-born for his mercy endureth for ever :* 11. *And brought out Israel from among them : for his mercy endureth for ever.* 12. *With a strong hand, and with stretched out arm : for his mercy endureth for ever.* 13. *To him which divided the Red Sea into parts for his mercy endureth for ever.* 14. *And made Israel to pass through the midst of it : for his mercy endureth for ever.* 15. *But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea : for his mercy endureth for ever.* 16. *To him which led his people through the wilderness : for his mercy endureth for ever.* 17. *To him which smote great kings : for his mercy endureth for ever.* 18. *And slew famous kings : for his mercy endureth for ever.* 19. *Sihon king of the Amorites : for his mercy endureth for ever.* 20. *And Og the king of Bashan : for his mercy endureth for ever.* 21. *And gave their land for an heritage : for his mercy endureth for ever.* 22. *Even an heritage unto Israel his servant : for his mercy endureth for ever.* 23. *Who remembered us in our low estate : for his mercy endureth for ever.* 24. *And hath redeemed us from our enemies : for his mercy endureth for ever.*

From the works of creation, the Psalmist proceeds to those of providence and grace. He celebrates that mercy which rescued Israel from oppression,

rought them out of the house of bondage, divided the sea to make a way for them, supported and conducted them through a waste, howling wilderness, showed the might and power of those who opposed them, and at length settled them in the inheritance promised to their fathers. Eternal mercy hath in Christ Jesus realized all these figures, and accomplished the great redemption, thus foreshadowed of old. The Israel of God hath been rescued from the oppression of Satan, and brought out of the house of spiritual bondage. In the waters of baptism the old man of sin is buried, and we arise triumphant, singing the praises of God our Saviour, who from henceforth supports and conducts us in our passage through the world, strengthening us in the day of battle against every enemy that opposeth us, till we enter the heavenly Canaan, promised to the fathers of our faith, and dwell for ever in the possession of peace. When we consider how God has thus 'remembered us in our low estate,' and how he 'redeemed us from our enemies,' can we be weary of repeating, 'For his mercy endureth for ever?'

*25. Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever. 26. O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

The same bounty which, in the natural world, has provided proper nutriment for every creature, hath also provided for the spirits of all flesh the bread of eternal life. In either sense, Jehovah 'openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness.' Be, therefore, his praise as universal and as lasting as his mercy!

## PSALM CXXXVII.

ARGUMENT.—The Israelites, captives in Babylon, 1, 2. describe their woful estate; and, 3, 4. the insults of their masters. 5, 6. They declare their inviolable affection for Jerusalem: 7. pray that God would remember the behaviour of Edom; and, 8, 9. predict the destruction of Babylon. This Psalm admits of a beautiful and useful application to the state of Christians in this world, and their expected deliverance out of it.

1. *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.*

What an inexpressible pathos is there in these few words! How do they at once transport us to Babylon, and place before our eyes the mournful situation of the Israelitish captives! Driven from their native country, stripped of every comfort and convenience, in a strange land, among idolaters, wearied and broken-hearted, they sit in silence by those hostile waters. Then the pleasant banks of Jordan present themselves to their imaginations; the towers of Salem rise to view; and the sad remembrance of much-loved Zion causes tears to run down their cheeks; ‘By the waters of Babylon we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion!’ Besides the use which may be made of this Psalm by any church, when, literally, in a state of captivity, there is a sense in which it may be used by us all. For Zion is, in Scripture, the standing type of heaven, as Babylon is the grand figure of the world, the seat of confusion, the oppressor and persecutor of the people of God. In these, or the like terms, we may, therefore, suppose a sinner to bemoan himself upon the earth:—O Lord, I am an Israelite, exiled by my sins from

thy holy city, and left to mourn in this Babylon, the land of my captivity. Here I dwell in sorrow, by these transient waters, musing on the restless and unstable nature of earthly pleasures, which pass swiftly by me, and are soon gone for ever. Yet for these, alas! I have exchanged the permanent joys of Zion, and parted with the felicity of thy chosen. Wherefore my heart is pained within me, and the remembrance of my folly will not let me rest night or day. O Zion, thou holy and beautiful city, the temple of the Lamb, the habitation of the blessed, the seat of delight, the land of the living, when shall I behold thee? When shall I enter thy gates with thanksgiving, and thy courts with praise? The hope of a return to thee is my only comfort in this vale of tears, where I am and will be a mourner, till my captivity be brought back, and my sorrow be turned into joy.

2. *We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.*

The additional circumstance, which the divine painter hath here thrown into his piece, is, to the last degree, just and striking. It was not enough to represent the Hebrew captives weeping on the banks of the Euphrates, at the remembrance of Zion, but, upon looking up, we behold their harps unstrung, and pendent on the willows that grew there. The sincere penitent, like them, hath bidden adieu to mirth; his soul refuseth to be comforted with the comforts of Babylon; nor can he sing any more, till pardon and restoration shall have enabled him to sing, in the temple, a song of praise and thanksgiving.

3. *For there they that carried us away captives re-*



*quired of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. 4. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land. ?<sup>1</sup>*

The Babylonians are introduced as insulting over the Israelites, and scoffing at their faith and worship, not without a tacit reflection on their God, who could not protect his favoured people against their enemies. 'Now sing us one of your songs of Zion; now let us hear you sound the praises of that God of whom ye boasted, that he dwelt among you in the temple which we have laid waste, and burnt with fire.' Thus the faithful have been, and thus they will be, insulted by infidels in the day of their calamity. And 'how,' indeed, 'can they sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' How can they tune their voices to festive and eucharistic strains, when God, by punishing them for their sins, calleth to mourning and weeping? But then, Israel in Babylon foresaw a day of redemption; and so doth the church in the world; a day when she shall triumph, and her enemies shall lick the dust. No circumstances, therefore, should make us forget her, and the promises concerning her.

*5. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. 6. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.*

<sup>1</sup> Many singers were carried captives: Ezra, ii. 41. These would of course take their instruments with them, and be insulted, as here. Their songs were sacred, and unfit to be sung before idolaters. But the words, 'How shall we sing?' &c. are not an answer given to them, but the free utterance afterward of the feelings of the Jews among themselves.—Anonymous Notes in Merrick's Annotations.

The whole nation may be supposed in these words to declare, as one man, that neither the afflictions nor the allurements of Babylon should efface from their minds the remembrance of Jerusalem, or prevent their looking forward to her future glorious restoration. If any temptation should induce them to employ their tongues and their hands in the service of Babel rather than in that of Zion, they wish to lose the use of the former and skill of the latter. The thoughts and affections of true penitents, both in prosperity and adversity, are fixed upon their heavenly country and city; they had rather be deprived of their powers and faculties, than of the will to use them aright; and the hope of glory, hereafter to be revealed in the church, is the flower and crown of their joy.

*7. Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof.*

The people of God beseech him to take their cause in hand, and to avenge them on their adversaries, particularly on the Edomites, who, though their brethren according to the flesh, being descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob, yet in the day of Jerusalem's affliction, when the Chaldeans came against it, were aiding and encouraging those pagans to destroy it utterly. Edom is charged with this unnatural behaviour, and threatened for it by God himself, in the prophecy of Obadiah, ver. 10, &c. 'For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into

his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother, in the day that he became a stranger: neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction.—For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee, thy reward shall return upon thine own head; but upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness, and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.' It may be observed, that the Jews afterwards acted the same part toward the Christian church, which the Edomites had acted toward them, encouraging and stirring up the Gentiles to persecute and destroy it from off the face of the earth. And God 'remembered' them for the Christians' sakes, as they prayed him to remember 'Edom' for their sakes. Learn we hence, what a crime it is for Christians to assist the common enemy, or call in the common enemy to assist them, against their brethren.

8. *O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee, as thou hast served us.* 9. *Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.*

The subject of these two verses is the same with that of many chapters in Isaiah and Jeremiah, namely, the vengeance of heaven executed upon Babylon by Cyrus, raised up to be king of the Medes and Persians, united under him for that purpose. The meaning of the words, 'happy shall he be,' is, He shall go on and prosper, for the Lord of hosts shall go with him, and fight his battles

against the enemy and oppressor of his people, empowering him to recompense upon the Chaldeans the works of their hands, and to reward them as they served Israel. The slaughter of the very infants, mentioned in the last verse, is expressly predicted by Isaiah, ch. xiii. 16: 'Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.' The destruction was to be universal, sparing neither sex nor age. Terrible, but just, are thy judgments, O Lord! The fall of the mystical 'Babylon' is described, Rev. xviii. in terms and phrases, borrowed from this and other prophecies, relating, primarily, to the ancient city called by that name. Whoever will carefully read over the chapter referred to, with the three subsequent ones concerning the triumph of Messiah, and the glory of the new Jerusalem, will be able to form proper ideas of the world and the church, and will know where to choose his portion.

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PSALM CXXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm containeth, 1—3. a resolution to praise God for a deliverance vouchsafed; 4, 5. a prophecy that the kings of the earth should glorify Jehovah for his mercy, shown, 6. in exalting the humble, and abasing the proud; 7, 8. an act of faith and confidence in God.

1. *I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.* 2. *I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name, for thy loving kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name; or, thou hast magnified thy name, even thy word, above all.*

In these verses we evidently hear the voice of one whom God had delivered from a state of great affliction and danger, and who therefore determines to make the due acknowledgments in public; to give thanks 'before the gods,' that is, before 'kings' and 'rulers' in the great congregation; to 'worship in the temple,' and there to set forth the 'loving kindness' and 'truth' of Jehovah, in having accomplished the promised salvation, and thereby 'magnified' his holy 'name' and his faithful 'word' over every thing that opposeth itself against it. The Christian church cannot find stronger and more emphatical terms, in which to express her sense of the greatest of all mercies, the redemption of the world by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and his exaltation 'above every name that is named in heaven and earth.'

*3. In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul. 4. All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, when they hear the words of thy mouth. 5. Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord: for great is the glory of the Lord.*

From this part of the Psalm it appears to be a prophetic one. The deliverance which it celebrates is of such a nature, that, when the glad tidings of it should be published to the world, we are told, it should induce the nations, with their princes, to adore Jehovah, to walk in his ways, and to chant forth his praises. The call of the Gentiles to the gospel is here foretold, in words which cannot be mistaken; and the redemption of the church, in Christ her head, is spoken of as the subject of thanksgiving among the kings of the earth. 'In

lay when I cried, thou answeredst me, and  
 strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.' For  
 reason, ' All the kings of the earth shall praise  
 O Lord,' &c.

*Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect  
 the lowly : but the proud he knoweth afar off.*

Humility is the way to salvation and glory. It  
 is the wisdom of our blessed Lord, that ' because he  
 humbled himself, therefore God highly exalted  
 him, and the great potentates of the world must  
 follow in his steps, if they would be exalted with  
 him. As to the proud, God ' knoweth' and he de-  
 spiseth them ; he beholdeth and keepeth them at a  
 distance.'

*Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt  
 preserve me : thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against  
 the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall  
 save me.*

10 doth not ' walk in the midst of trouble,'  
 his pilgrimage is prolonged upon the earth ?  
 hath not ' enemies' encompassing him on  
 all sides ? O, how comfortable then the reflection  
 that he is with us, who can ' revive' the dead ;  
 we are under the protection of an ' arm' which  
 is mighty ! Yes, blessed Lord, we believe that  
 the saying of thy holy Psalmist will be verified to  
 the child of thine, even as it was to him, and to  
 John, Jesus, in whose person he might speak it,  
 the prophet. Great indeed were the ' troubles,'  
 the midst of which the true David ' walked' up  
 and down amongst us. He carried all our sorrows,  
 and he bare all our sins. ' Yet didst thou re-  
 deem him ;' thou didst raise him from the dead, and

exalt him to thy throne in heaven, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us, that we, who, in the days of our flesh, do also 'walk in the midst of trouble,' may be revived by thy Spirit, the giver of life and holiness.

8. *The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.*

In troublous times, and the days of affliction, we must look back on that which God hath already done for us, and from thence draw an argument, that he will 'perfect' that which remains, and not leave his work unfinished: we must remember, that his mercies fail not after a time, but 'endure for ever' the same; and when we call to mind that we are 'the work of his own hands,' how can we think he will 'forsake us,' unless we utterly and finally forsake him?

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*Twenty-ninth Day.—Morning Prayer.*

PSALM CXXXIX.

ARGUMENT.—It seems evident, from the latter part of this noble and instructive Psalm, that the author penned it at a time when he was persecuted and calumniated, as an appeal to the all-seeing Judge between him and his adversaries. He takes the opportunity of expatiating in the sublimest manner, 1—12. on the omnipresence and omniscience of him who, 13—16. formeth man in the womb by his power, and, 17, 18. preserveth him through life by his providence. He then, 19, 20. expresseth his confidence that God, as knowing all things, would deliver him from his enemies; 21, 22. he declareth his zeal and fidelity in the service of his divine Master, by whom, 23, 24. he petitioneth to be proved, purified, and perfected in the way of holiness.

1. *O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and my up-rising, and understandest my thoughts afar off.* 3. *Thou passest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.* 4. *For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it together, or, When there is not a word in my tongue, O Lord, &c.* 5. *Thou hast beset me behind and fore, and laid thine hand upon me.* 6. *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*

The Psalmist employeth a beautiful variety of expressions to denote his faith in the omnipresence and omniscience of Jehovah, to whom, in the latter part of the Psalm, he appealeth, as the proper Judge between him and his implacable enemies. He describeth his God as having that complete knowledge of him and his affairs, which, among men, the most accurate 'search' and the strictest scrutiny could not obtain; as being thoroughly acquainted with all his ways' or proceedings, and with his very 'thoughts,' while yet existing only in embryo, in his own mind; as watching and serving him at all seasons during the actions of the day, and his repose at night, and, in short, as being so 'beset' him on all sides, and 'laid his hand upon him,' that he could not move without knowledge and consent. When we reflect that all things are thus naked and open to him with whom we have to do; that although he dwelleth in the highest heavens, he surveyeth not only the outward acts, but the very hearts and imaginations, men upon earth—must we not each of us cry, 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it



is high, I cannot attain unto it; I cannot admire it enough, for I cannot conceive of it aright!—"The actual, constant consideration of God's presence would be the readiest way in the world to make sin to cease from among the children of men, and for men to approach to the blessed estate of the saints in heaven, who cannot sin, for they always walk in the presence, and behold the face of God." See Bishop Taylor's *Holy Living*, chap. i. sect. 3.

*7. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8. If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, or, the grave, behold thou art there. 9. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10. Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*

We can never sin with security, but in a place where the eye of God cannot behold us. And where is that place? Had we a mind to escape his inspection, 'whither should we go?' Heaven is the seat of his glory, creation the scene of his providence, and the grave itself will be the theatre of his power; so that our efforts will be equally vain, whether we ascend, or descend, or fly abroad upon the wings of the morning light, which diffuseth itself with such velocity over the globe from east to west. The arm of the Almighty will still at pleasure prevent, and be ready to arrest the fugi-

lives in their progress. Darkness may, indeed, conceal us and our deeds from the sight of men; but the divine presence, like that of the sun, turns night into day, and makes all things manifest before God. The same consideration which should restrain us from sin, should also encourage us to work righteousness, and comfort us under all our sorrows; namely, the thought that we are never out of the sight and protection of our Maker. The piety and the charity which are practised in cottages; the labour and the pain which are patiently endured in the field, and on the bed of sickness; the misery and torment inflicted by persecution in the mines, the galleys, and the dungeons; all are under the inspection of Jehovah, and are noted down by him against the day of recompense. He sees, and he will reward all we do, and all we suffer as becometh Christians. He who, for our sakes, caused his Son to descend from heaven to the lower parts of the earth, and from thence to ascend to heaven again, will watch over, preserve, and re-assemble the parts of our bodies, though dissolved in the grave, buried in the ocean, or dispersed to the four winds. So that, with allusion to this event also, a dying servant of God may exclaim, Whither can I go from thy Spirit? or whither can I flee from thy presence? If, as to my spiritual part, I ascend into heaven, thou art there to receive me; if, as touching my body, I make my bed in שְׂאוֹל, or the grave, behold thou art there, to secure me. If I take the wings of the wind, or those yet more expeditious ones of the morning, and am carried by them to dwell in the midst of the sea, instead of the bowels of the earth, still shall I be under thy power and providence; even

there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me fast, preserving me for a joyful resurrection at the time appointed.

13. *For thou hast possessed, or, formed, my reins; thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.* 14. *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*

That God seeth in darkness, and that from him nothing is hidden, his knowledge of, and power over our most inward parts, do plainly show. He 'formed,' and he therefore 'possesseth,' as his own property, our 'reins,' and is consequently privy to all those affections and desires which flow from thence.—It was he who 'covered us' in the womb, or, as it is elsewhere expressed, Job, x. 11, who 'clothed us with skin and flesh, and fenced us with bones and sinews;' a work so astonishing, that before the Psalmist proceeds in his description of it, he cannot help breaking forth in rapture at the thought: 'I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made!'

"Obstupeo, et memet lætâ formidine lastro,  
Divini monumentum operis!" Lowth.

With awful joy I view this frame of mine,  
Stupendous monument of pow'r divine!

15. *My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought, or, variegated like needle-work, in the lowest parts of the earth.* 16 *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*

By the 'lower parts of the earth' is undoubtedly to be understood the 'womb,' where the fœtus is gradually formed and matured for the birth, like plants and flowers under ground. The process is compared to that in a piece of work wrought with a needle, or fashioned in the loom; which, with all its beautiful variety of colour, and proportion of figure, ariseth by degrees to perfection under the hand of the artist, framed according to a pattern lying before him, from a rude mass of silk, or other materials. Thus, by the wisdom and power of God, and after a plan delineated in his book, is a shapeless mass wrought up into the most curious texture of nerves, veins, arteries, bones, muscles, membranes, and skin, most skilfully interwoven and connected with each other, until it becometh a body, harmoniously diversified with all the limbs and lineaments of a man, not one of which at first appeared, any more than the figures were to be seen in the ball of silk. But then (which is the chief thing here insisted on by the Psalmist) whereas the human artificer must have the clearest light whereby to accomplish his task, the divine Work-master seeth in secret, and effecteth all his wonders within the dark and narrow confines of the womb. The reformation of our corrupted and dissolved bodies, which is to be wrought, at the last day, in the womb of the earth, in order to their new birth, will crown all the works of the Almighty.

17. *How precious also are thy thoughts unto, or concerning, me, O God! how great is the sum of them!* 18. *If I should count them, they are more*

*in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.*

From the wonders of God's forming hand, the Psalmist proceeds to those of his all-directing providence, which afford additional proofs of the divine omniscience and omnipresence. The 'thoughts' and counsels of Jehovah concerning David, his appointment to the throne, his troubles and his preservation in the midst of them, were 'precious' and delightful subjects of meditation and praise, never to be exhausted of the rich matter they contained. With these in his mind, he lay down at night to rest, and 'when he awoke' in the morning, his thoughts naturally recurred to the pleasing theme; he began where he had left off, and found himself, in heart and soul, 'still present with God,' still ruminating on him and his works. The mercies of heaven in the redemption of the church, by the sufferings and exaltation of the true David, according to the divine decree concerning him—how precious are they to believers! How great is the sum, how far exceeding all human arithmetic to number them! Let them be to us the constant subjects of contemplation, admiration, and thanksgiving, day and night; and let death, that *last* sleep, find us engaged in an employment which, when we awake and arise from the grave, we shall resume, and prosecute to eternity in the presence of God.

19. *Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: or, Wilt thou not slay the wicked, O God? depart from me, therefore, ye blood-thirsty men.* 20. *For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain.*

David now draws the intended conclusion from the premises, so largely expatiated upon in the former part of the Psalm. As if he had said, And wilt thou not, O God, thou who art everywhere present, seeing and knowing all things; thou to whom the justice of my cause, and the iniquity of mine adversaries are equally open; thou who hast formed, and hitherto, in so wonderful a manner, watched over and preserved thy servant; 'wilt thou not slay the wicked,' and deliver me, as thou hast promised to do, out of their hands? I know thou wilt: 'depart from me, therefore, ye blood-thirsty men;' I trust in my God, and will have no connexion, in the way of treaty or friendship, with you. You are not my enemies, but those of Jehovah; against whom, not considering that he is privy to all your words, and even to your thoughts, you 'speak' presumptuously and 'wickedly,' and whose 'name' you 'take in vain,' no less when you do evil under a godly pretence, and call him to witness the truth of your lies and calumnies, than when you openly blaspheme him. Such seemeth to be the full import of these two verses; and their application to the members of the church, when at any time in similar circumstances, is obvious.

21. *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?* 22. *I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*

A faithful servant hath the same interests, the same friends, the same enemies with his Master, whose cause and honour he is, upon all occasions, in duty bound to support and maintain. A good man hates, as God himself doth; he hates not the

persons of men, but their sins; not what God made them, but what they have made themselves. We are neither to hate the men, on account of the vices they practise; nor to love the vices, for the sake of the men who practise them. He who observeth invariably this distinction, fulfilleth the perfect law of charity, and hath the love of God and of his neighbour abiding in him.

*23. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

In the first verse of the Psalm, David declared, that Jehovah had 'searched him out, and known him:' he concludes with a petition, that his proceedings, and even his thoughts, might be still scrutinized by his Maker, in order to their perfect purification from any evil which might be in them, or adhere to them. Should the hottest furnace of adversity be found necessary to purge the dross from the silver, he refuseth not to be dissolved in it, and new-formed, so that he might only become a vessel of honour fitted for the Master's use here below, and vouchsafed a place afterwards in his temple above. 'See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!'

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PSALM CXL.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm containeth, 1—8. a prayer for deliverance from persecutors and calumniators, their violence and their wiles; 9—11. a prophecy of their final destruction,

and, 12, 13. the salvation of the afflicted righteous. It was composed by David in his troubles, and is applicable to Christ and to the church, respectively, in theirs.

1. *Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man : preserve me from the violent man : 2. Which imagine mischiefs in their heart ; continually are they gathered together for war.*

' Evil and violent men ' exist in all ages, to harass and oppress the servants of God ; their thoughts are employed in ' imagining mischief ' against such, and their hands are ready at all times for the ' war.' Had we no enemies without, there are those within, who are ever fighting and troubling us. We cannot put off our Christian armour for a moment in this world ; nor enter into peace and rest, but by a happy death and a joyful resurrection. Then God will ' deliver ' us, as he delivered David, and our blessed Lord and Master, the Son of David, from their respective enemies.

3. *They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent : adders' poison is under their lips.*

Slander and calumny must always precede and accompany persecution, because malice itself cannot excite people against a good man, as such ; to do this, he must first be represented as a bad man. What can be said of those who are busied in this manner, but that they are a ' generation of vipers,' the brood of the old ' serpent,' that grand accuser and calumniator of the brethren, having under their tongues a bag of ' poison ' conveying instant death to the reputation on which they fasten ? Thus David was hunted as a rebel, Christ was crucified as a blasphemer, and the primitive Christians were tortured as guilty of incest and murder.



*4. Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent men, who have purposed to overthrow my goings. 5. The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the way-side; they have set gins for me.*

David here describeth the subtilty and industry employed by his enemies to effect his destruction, by lying in wait for him, as a skilful fowler doth for his game, so that they thought it impossible he should escape their hands. Such was the conduct of the Jews, with regard to the Son of David. And, O, how refined the policy, how unwearied the application of our spiritual adversaries, to 'overthrow our goings' in the path of life and salvation, to circumvent, and to destroy us for ever! How are 'the snares, the nets, and the gins,' placed for us, by that cunning and experienced artist, who takes care that nothing should appear in view, but the alluring baits of honour, pleasure, and profit, while of the toils we have no notice, till we find ourselves entangled and caught in them! Who shall preserve us thus walking in the midst of dangers? He to whom David, in the following verses, preferreth his prayer, and teacheth us to do likewise.

*6. I said unto the Lord: Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O Lord. 7. O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle. 8. Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; lest they exalt themselves.*

Jehovah, the God of David, is also our God, and he is always ready to hear our supplications. He is our strength, and hath often covered our head with the helmet of salvation, in the day of battle and open

war with our spiritual enemies. Nor will he, for the glory of his name, grant their desires, or permit their more secret 'devices' and machinations to work the destruction of his people; lest they exalt themselves as having frustrated his counsels for the redemption of his servants.

9. *As for the head of those that compass me about, the mischief of their own lips shall cover them.* 10. *Burning coals shall fall upon them; they shall be cast into the fire, into deep pits, that they rise not up again.* 11. *An evil speaker shall not be established in the earth; evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.*

The prophet, in these three verses, predicteth those just judgments which heaven will inflict on the slanderers and persecutors of the righteous. Their lips, which uttered mischief against others, shall be the means of covering themselves with confusion, when out of their own mouths they shall be judged. Those tongues, which have contributed to set the world on fire, shall be tormented with the hot burning coals of eternal vengeance: and they who, with so much eagerness and diligence, have prepared pits for the destruction of their brethren, shall be cast into a deep and bottomless pit, out of which they will not rise up again any more for ever. Evil speakers and false accusers shall gain no lasting establishment, but punishment shall hunt sin through all its doubles, and seize it at last as its legal prey. Let these great truths be firmly rooted in our hearts, and they will keep us steady in the worst of times.

12. *I know that the Lord will maintain the cause*

*of the afflicted, and the right of the poor. 13. Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.*

That unjust and oppressive men shall, in the end, suffer proportionably to their deserts, we are assured from this consideration, namely, that the Almighty is the patron of the injured and oppressed. He will plead the cause of the meek and lowly, who are used by the world as their blessed Master was used before them. A day will come, when, delivered out of all their troubles, they shall 'give thanks unto thy name,' O Lord, and 'dwell in thy presence' for evermore.

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### PSALM CXLI.

**ARGUMENT.**—David seems to have composed this Psalm just before his flight to Achish king of Gath; when he had a second time spared Saul's life, but could trust him no longer: see 1 Sam. xxvi. and xxvii. 1, 2. He prayeth earnestly for help, and entreateth to be heard, as when able to attend the service of the tabernacle; 3—5. he petitioneth to be preserved from the snares of idolatry, in the country whither he was going; 6, 7. he relateth his own conduct toward Saul, and that of Saul toward him; 8, 9. he professeth his faith in Jehovah, and redoubleth his prayer to him; 10. he predicteth the destruction of his enemies, and his own deliverance. Many parts of the exposition of this Psalm, given by the late learned Mr. Peters, in his "Critical Dissertation on the Book of Job," have been adopted in the ensuing comment.

1. Lord, *I will cry unto thee, make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.* 2. *Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*

The earnest and repeated supplication for help, in the first of these two verses, sufficiently declares the Psalmist to have been, at the time, in a situation of the utmost distress. And the second verse as plainly sheweth, that he was then at a distance from the tabernacle, where all the solemn prayers of the Israelites, together with their daily sacrifices, were offered up. And therefore, with his face, probably, directed thither, like Daniel in Babylon praying towards Jerusalem, he begs that God would accept of all which it was in his power to perform, namely, the devotion of his heart, and the elevation of his hands in prayer; that the one might ascend to heaven, fragrant and well-pleasing, as the cloud of 'incense' mounting from the holy altar; and the other, in conjunction with it, prevail instead of the 'evening oblation,' for the deliverance of himself and his companions.

3. *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips; or, a guard over the door of my lips.* 4. *Incline not mine heart, i. e. suffer not my heart to be inclined, to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity, or, idolatry; and let me not eat of their dainties.*

David was now going to seek a retreat from the persecutions of his master, Saul, amidst a race of idolaters, who would be curious to observe all his words and actions, and would attempt to draw him in to be a partaker with them in their idol-worship, or to suspect him as a spy and an enemy, if he refused to comply with them. He therefore beseeches God to 'set a watch before his mouth, a guard over the door of his lips,' that he might neither endanger his own safety by his imprudent carriage, nor vio-

late his religion by any weak compliances. He entreats to be preserved from that greatest of a evils, the renouncing Jehovah to follow vain and strange gods. He desires that he might not be guilty of this heinous and presumptuous sin, not so much as in thought;—‘Suffer not mine heart to be inclined to any evil thing;’ that he might abhor to play the hypocrite, by joining in the abominations of the heathen, ‘the men that work idolatry,’ though but in show and appearance only; and that he might never be allured by the pomp and pleasure of their feasts, by their luxurious meats and lascivious rites, to mix in the religious festivals, to eat and drink, and rise up to play:—‘neither let me eat of their dainties.’ A Christian, living among unbelievers and sensualists in the world, hath abundant reason to put up the same prayers, and to use the same precautions.

5. *Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break, or, depress, my head for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities or, against their wickedness.*

David continueth his prayer, and beggeth of heaven, as one of its best and choicest blessings that if at any time, through the frailty of nature he should be inclined to yield to the above-mentioned temptations, he might find, among his attendants, some ‘righteous’ and faithful friend, who might, with a kind severity, check and ‘reprove him. Such reproof, he says, would, at that season be to him as *שמן ראש*, the ‘chief,’ or most precious and ‘excellent oil;’ see Exod. xxx. 23: it would not ‘depress his head,’ *אל יני ראשי*, or cause his

hang it down,' as people in sorrow do, but it could be 'the oil of gladness,' refreshing, enlivening, strengthening, and enabling him to lift up his head above the temptation against which he had been praying, and, with renewed vigour, would still continue to pray; for 'yet my prayer' shall be *בדעותיהם*, 'against their wickednesses.' The blessed effects of reproof, when given and taken as it ought to be, never, surely, were more exactly or more beautifully described.

6. *When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.*

Of this verse, as it stands in our translation, I know not what can be made. When literally rendered from the Hebrew, it runs thus: 'Their judges have been dismissed in the sides of the rock, and have heard my words that they were sweet.' David, reflecting on Saul's cruelty in driving him out of his country, to wander amongst aliens and idolaters, very naturally calls to mind, and mentions, his own different behaviour towards that implacable enemy, whose life he had spared at two several times, when he had it in his power to destroy him as he pleased. 'Their judges,' or princes, leaders, generals, &c. according to the frequent usage of the word in Scripture, *גִּשְׁמֹתָם*, 'have been dismissed' (the common signification of the verb *שָׁמַט*) 'in the sides of the rock,' when I had them at an advantage there; 1 Sam. xxiv 3, 'and have heard my words, that they were sweet;' they only heard me expostulate with them in a manner so mild and humble, that even Saul him-

<sup>1</sup> This is Mr. Peters's interpretation of the verse, and Dr. Durell hath fallen upon the same.

self was overcome, and 'lift up his voice and wept, saying, My son David, thou art more righteous than I. The Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.' 1 Sam. xxiv. 16. Such hath been my conduct towards the servants of Saul. Yet how have my people, alas! been by them most miserably butchered.

*7. Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.*

This probably alludes to the bloody massacre of Ahimelech and the priests that were in Nob, who, to the number of eighty-five persons, all of a sacred character, and all innocent, were inhumanly slaughtered together by Doeg the Edomite. Such havoc as this might well be compared to the cutting and cleaving of wood, like the fragments of which the bones of the sufferers lay scattered here and there upon the ground, as many of the bodies might be devoured, before pits were prepared, near the field of slaughter, for their interment. To feel the force of the Psalmist's expressions in this verse, we need not have recourse to such extraordinary scenes of tyranny and cruelty. The daily dissolution and destruction of our bodies, in the common way, will be found abundantly sufficient for the purpose. For who can attend the digging of a grave, and thus view the ruins then disclosed, without exclaiming, 'Our bones lie scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth?' Indeed, Rachel hath often had occasion to bemoan her children, thus untimely slain by the unrelenting sword of persecution. But let her refrain her voice from weeping, and her eyes from tears. Her children shall return

again from the dead, and their bones shall rejoice and flourish as an herb. Jer. xxxi. 15; Isa. lxi. 14.

8. *But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord: in thee is my trust: leave not my soul destitute.*

9. *Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.*

The principle upon which David acted, and supported himself under his troubles, was a firm trust in God, and a steady resolution to obey him. With confidence therefore he made his prayer, that Jehovah would keep him from the snares which Saul and his counsellors had laid for him on one hand, and from those of the idolaters, among whom he was driven, on the other; that so he might not be left destitute and lose his life, or, which he prized more, his faith. For it is remarkable, that in his last speech to Saul, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19, where he mentions the wicked policy of his enemies, who had contrived to force him into banishment, he mentions not the dangers of his life, but only that of his religion:—‘They have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go serve other gods;’ intimating, that they had done what lay in their power to drive him to idolatry by forcing him into a country where he would have the strongest temptation to it.

10. *Let the wicked, or, the wicked shall, fall into their own nets together, whilst that I withal escape.*

From the sequel of the history we find that the hope and assurance here expressed by the Psalmist were not vain. He escaped all the snares that were laid for him on every side; he lived to see



the death of Saul, who fell in a battle with the Philistines, and those Philistines subdued by himself and his subjects. So will the devices of all our enemies be in the end turned against themselves: they shall fall and perish, but we shall triumph, with our Redeemer, to eternity.

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*Twenty-ninth Day.—Evening Prayer.*

### PSALM CXLII.

**ARGUMENT.**—The title of this Psalm informs us, that it was a prayer of David, when he was in the cave, that is, most probably, the cave of Adullam, whither he fled when in danger both from Saul and from the Philistines: 1 Sam. xxii. 1. It containeth, 1, 2. a supplication; 3—5. an act of confidence in God in that season of danger and destitution; 6. a tender complaint of his sufferings, and, 7. a petition for deliverance. Our translators having rendered some of the verbs in the past tense, the liberty hath been taken to alter them, agreeably to the Hebrew, and to the tenour of the Psalm, which seemeth to be an actual prayer, and not the relation of one.

1. *I will cry unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord will I make my supplication.*
2. *I will pour out my complaint before him; I will show before him my trouble.*

The state of David in the cave of Adullam was a state of utter destitution. Persecuted by his own countrymen, dismissed by Achish, and not yet joined by his own relations, or any other attendants, he took refuge in the cave, and was there alone. But in that disconsolate, and seemingly desperate situation, he desponded not. He had a friend in heaven, into whose bosom he ‘poured forth his

complaint,' and told him the sad story of his trouble and distress. When danger besetteth us around, and fear is on every side, let us follow the example of David, and that of a greater than David, who, when Jews and Gentiles conspired against him, and he was left all alone, in the garden, and on the cross, gave himself unto prayer.

*3. When my spirit is overwhelmed within me, then thou knowest my path. In the way wherein I walk, have they privily laid a snare for me.*

The meaning is, Though my thoughts are so broken and confused, that I am not able to counsel and direct myself in these straits, yet thou knowest the path wherein I walk, thou art with me, and wilt preserve me from those who watch all my steps, and lie in ambush for me. Such should be at all times the confidence of believers in the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of God, even when human prudence has done its utmost, and is at its wit's end.

*5. Look on my right hand, and see that there is no man that will know me : refuge faileth me ; no man careth for my soul. 5. I cry unto thee, O Lord ; I say, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living,*

David beseecheth God to consider his destitute condition, to 'look on his right hand,' the place where the advocate used to stand, and to 'see that there was no man that would know,' 'acknowledge him, and take his part ; ' refuge failed him ; ' there was on earth no patron to whom he could commit himself and his cause : no one, דורש, that would ' seek, require, or avenge his soul.' Thus

Dr. Hammond expounds the words in a forensic sense. How affectingly do they describe the destitution of David in the cave, and that of the Son of David in the day of his passion, death, and burial! Death will, in like manner, strip us of all our earthly connexions and dependences. But even at that hour, may we, each of us, 'cry unto thee, O Lord, and say, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.'

*6. Attend unto my cry ; for I am brought very low : deliver me from my persecutors ; for they are stronger than I. 7. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name : the righteous shall compass me about : for, or, when, thou shalt deal bountifully with me.*

This prayer of David was heard and answered ; he was delivered from his persecutors, enlarged from his distress, exalted to the throne, and joined by all the tribes of Israel. The true David was delivered from his stronger persecutors, brought from the sepulchre, exalted to his heavenly throne, owned and submitted to by the converted nations, who became the Israel and people of God. Nor let us fear, though we be brought very low, and our persecutors, the world, the flesh, and the devil, be at any time too strong for us. God will deliver us from the bondage of sin, and redeem us from the prison of the grave, to join the great assembly before the throne, and there to praise his name for ever.

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## PSALM CXLIII.

**ARGUMENT.**—This is the seventh and last of the Penitential Psalms; and as we are not informed of any particular temporal calamities, which gave occasion to its being composed, we shall explain it according to the general use now made of it in the church, for which, indeed, it seems to have been originally and entirely designed. After the example of David, the penitent, 1. maketh his prayer to God for pardon; 2. acknowledgeth the impossibility of any man being saved but by grace; 3, 4. deploareth the lamentable effects of sin; 5. comforteth himself with a retrospect of God's mercies of old; and, 6—12. prayeth, in a variety of expressions, for remission of sin, sanctification, and redemption.

1. *Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousnesses.*

When Mary Magdalene washed the feet of Christ with her tears, he knew what the petition was which her soul desired to have granted, and answered it accordingly, before it was made in words, by saying, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' Thus the penitent, without mentioning the subject of his request, as being well known to God, begs that his 'prayer and supplication may be heard and answered,' agreeably to the 'faithfulness and righteousness of Jehovah.'

2. *And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*

In the first verse, the suppliant appealed to the promises of God, and his fidelity in performing them. Here he urgeth the fallen, sinful, wretched state of human nature, which hath rendered it absolutely impossible that any son of Adam can be

saved, should God 'enter into judgment with him and exact the punishment due to his offences according to the law, instead of pardoning them by an act of grace. The thoughts of such a trial are enough to appal the soul of the best man living, to make his flesh tremble, and all his bones shake as if he stood at the foot of Sinai, and beheld Jehovah ready to break forth upon him in the flames of devouring fire.

*3. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. 4. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.*

We have an 'enemy' who 'persecutes' us with unrelenting malice; he 'smites our life down to the ground,' as often as we yield to temptation and fall from our state of holiness, to grovel in base and earthly desires; he 'makes us to dwell in darkness,' when he has thus withdrawn us from the light of heaven, which before illuminated us, where we walked in it; the spiritual life, for a time, extinguished, and we become, for all the purposes of faith and charity, 'like those that have been long dead. Therefore,' at the consideration of our sad estate, when God has enabled us to see and know it, our 'spirit is overwhelmed within us,' with remorse, anxiety, and despondency; and 'our heart within us,' deprived of the comforts of conscience, the joys of the Spirit, and the presence of the Beloved, 'is desolate,' forlorn, miserable. To rescue the sinner from this disconsolate and lost condition, our blessed Saviour was forsaken

on the cross; 'his spirit was overwhelmed within him, and his heart within him was desolate; the enemy' was suffered to 'smite his' precious 'life down to the ground,' and he 'dwelt,' for three days, 'in darkness, as the men that have been long dead.'

*5. I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.*

When sin has thus laid us low, and, as it were, slain and entombed us, we begin to revive and to arise from the dead, through hope of forgiveness and restoration to the divine favour, by 'remembering the days of old, and meditating on all the works' of love and mercy, which Jehovah then wrought towards those who were sinners like ourselves. While we 'muse' on such instances of his goodness, the reflection is obvious: Is he not still the same gracious God? Will he not do as much for us, upon our repentance, as he hath formerly done for others, upon theirs? 'Let us arise, and go to our Father!'

*6. I stretch forth my hands unto thee; my soul thirsteth after thee as a thirsty land.*

Prayer is the voice of faith. The sinner who views his situation, and believes, on having considered God's works of old, that he shall be delivered out of it, will soon 'stretch forth his hands,' in supplication to heaven. His soul will gasp and pant after that grace and mercy which descend from above, like the rain in its season, to bestow refreshment, beauty, and fertility on a parched and 'thirsty land.' While we recite this verse, let us not be unmindful of Him whose hands were often

stretched forth in prayer for his people, and whose soul thirsted after our salvation, even then, when he felt extremity of bodily thirst on the cross.

*7. Hear me speedily, O Lord : my spirit faileth ; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.*

These words would come with propriety from the mouth of one in danger of temporal death. They are no less proper in the mouth of him who is in danger of death eternal. Rather, they receive an additional force and energy when used in this latter sense.

*8. Cause me to hear thy loving kindness in the morning ; for in thee do I trust : cause me to know the way wherein I should walk ; for I lift up my soul unto thee.*

The penitent prayeth, that he may 'hear the voice of God's loving kindness,' speaking pardon and peace to his soul, 'in the morning' speedily and early, after the long dark night of fear and sorrow through which he is passing. This he hopes, because, disclaiming all other reliance, he placeth his confidence in God alone ; 'in thee do I trust.' Nor is he only solicitous for the forgiveness of what is past, but for future direction in the course of duty ; 'show thou me the way wherein I should walk.' And to the end that he may follow such directions, he hath withdrawn his affections from things below, and set them on things above ; 'I lift up my soul unto thee.'

*9. Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies : I flee unto thee to hide me. 10. Teach me to do thy will ; for thou art my God : thy Spirit is good ; lead me,*

*or, let thy good Spirit lead me, into the land of uprightness.*

He continueth to pray that he may be 'delivered from his enemies,' the world, the flesh, and the devil, from whose temptations he 'fleeth,' by repentance and faith, to the Almighty, to 'hide' and protect him. He requesteth to be fully instructed in the 'will' of him, whom, as his Lord and his 'God,' he hath determined to serve and obey. But conscious of his own inability to do the will of Jehovah, even when known, he entreateth the good Spirit of God to 'lead' him out of the mazes of error and the pollutions of vice, into the pleasant 'land' of truth and holiness.<sup>1</sup>

11. *Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake; for thy righteousness' sake, bring my soul out of trouble.* 12. *And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant.*

The verbs in these two last verses, as Dr. Hammond hath noted, should be rendered in the future; 'Thou shalt quicken,' &c. and then the Psalm will end, as usual, with an act of faith and assurance, that all those mercies which have been asked shall be obtained; that God, for the sake of his 'name,' and his 'righteousness,' of his glory, and his faithfulness in the performance of his promises, will not fail to be favourable and gracious to his servants,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Merrick mentions the similar phrase of *πεδιον αληθειας*, and *λειμων αληθειας*, among the Greeks. Or מִישׁוֹךְ מִיִּשְׁוֹךְ may signify 'the land that is plain and direct, even and straight,' where he might pursue his intended course of piety and goodness, without fear of meeting with obstructions in the way, or danger of wandering out of it.



'quickenings' them, even when dead in trespasses and sins, and bringing them, by degrees, 'out of all their troubles;' going forth with them to the battle against their spiritual 'enemies,' and enabling them to vanquish the authors of their 'affliction' and misery, to mortify the flesh, and to overcome the world; that so they may triumph with their Redeemer, in the day when he shall likewise quicken their mortal bodies, and put all enemies under their feet.

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*Thirtieth Day.—Morning Prayer.*

PSALM CXLIV.

ARGUMENT.—It appears from verse 2. and verse 10. of this Psalm, that it was composed after David's accession to the throne. And it is evident, from verse 5, &c. that he had more enemies still to conquer, such as the Philistines, &c. He therefore, 1, 2. blesseth Jehovah; and, 3, 4. expresseth his astonishment at the divine goodness shown to such a creature as man; 5—8. he beseecheth God to perfect his work, and subdue the remaining adversaries by the might of his power. 9, 10. He breaks forth again into a strain of thanksgiving, and, 11—15. again returns to his prayers for the complete redemption, and the prosperity of Israel. If we substitute in our minds, Messiah for David, the church for Israel, and spiritual for temporal blessings, the Psalm will present itself to us as a noble evangelical hymn.

1. *Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.*

What David here acknowledgeth, with regard to his victories, and that skill or might by which they were obtained, should be likewise acknowledged by all earthly kings and generals, in the

day of battle and conquest. For success in our spiritual warfare, we depend on the grace of God, which alone can give us wisdom and 'strength to have victory and triumph against sin, the world, and the devil.' Even the Captain of our salvation fought and overcame by a power that was divine. 'Jehovah taught his hands to war, and his fingers to fight.' And 'blessed,' on that account, be the name of Jehovah, in the church for evermore.

2. *My goodness, Heb. my mercy,<sup>1</sup> and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.*

The 'goodness,' or 'mercy,' of God inclineth us, in time of trouble, to fly to him as to a 'fortress,' or 'tower,' in which we find refuge; and when we have thus put ourselves under his patronage, he becometh our 'deliverer' from present danger; our 'shield,' or protector, against any that may afterwards arise; the object of our unlimited 'trust' and confidence; and, at last, the 'subduer' of all opposition 'under us.'

3. *Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him? or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?* 4. *Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.*

After a thanksgiving for the works which Jehovah had wrought, followeth a reflection on the creature 'man,' for whom they were wrought.

<sup>1</sup> That is, 'who art merciful to me,' the abstract being put for the concrete, as in Ps. xii. 1; Prov. x. 29; Ezek. xlii. 6; Hos. viii. 9. Dr. Durell thinks we should read יְהוּסָה, 'my refuge,' as in other parallel places.

Such a reflection introduced in the same manner, and almost in the same words, we meet with in Ps. viii. 4; which passage, being cited by the apostle, Heb. ii. 6, and applied to Christ, affords an argument, as Dr. Hammond hath justly observed, for a like application of the verses now before us, in their more eminent, prophetic, mystical sense. For, certainly, if David, upon the remembrance of what God had done for him, could break forth into this reflection, much more may we do so, for whom the Redeemer hath been manifested in the form of a servant, and in that form hath humbled himself to the death of the cross, to gain us the victory over principalities and powers, to put all things under our feet, and to make us partakers of his everlasting kingdom. Lord, what, indeed, is man, אָדָם, or, what is the son of such a miserable creature, בְּנֵי־אָדָם, that thou shouldest take this knowledge, and make this account of him? man, who is now become like vanity, or instability itself; whose days are fleeting and transient as a shadow, which glides over the earth, vanishes, and is seen no more! Such was human nature: but the Son of God hath taken it upon himself, rendered it immortal, and exalted it to heaven; whither all will follow him hereafter, who follow him now in the paths of righteousness and holiness.

*5. Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down; touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. 6. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them; shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them. 7. Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children; 8. Whose mouth*

*speakeeth vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.*

David, having celebrated his victories over some of his enemies, and extolled the mercy and goodness of God, to whom he ascribeth the achievement of them, now proceedeth to request a further manifestation of the omnipotent arm in his favour against other hostile forces, which still threatened his country upon his accession to the throne; such as the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, &c. see 2 Sam. v. and viii. These are called, metaphorically, ‘great waters,’ threatening to overwhelm and destroy every thing; and, in plainer terms, ‘strange children,’ or aliens from the covenant of Jehovah, and the commonwealth of Israel; children who ‘speak lies, and work wickedness;’ or, as Dr. Hammond interpreteth the 8th verse, ‘whose mouth speaketh, or maketh profession of vanity,’ שוא, that is, idolatry; ‘and their right hand,’ that on which they depend for support, the object of their confidence, ‘is a right hand of falsehood,’ שוהר, and one that will fail all who rely upon it for help. Jehovah, the God of Israel, is therefore entreated once more to appear in the cause of his anointed; to go forth, as of old, to the battle against the enemies of his people, with all the tokens of displeasure and vengeance, dismaying and putting to flight these ‘armies of aliens.’ In like manner, the church, or mystical body of Christ, is instant in prayer for the final completion of her hope. She wisheth for the glorious day, when her God and Saviour shall bow the heavens, and come down to judgment, causing the mountains to smoke, and flame, and dissolve, and flow down before him; when his lightnings,

those arrows of his indignation, and ministers of his vengeance, shall scatter the host of darkness, and destroy the anti-christian powers; when we shall be delivered from every enemy, and from all that hate us, and David our King.

*9. I will sing a new song unto thee, O God : upon a psalter and an instrument of ten strings, will I sing praises unto thee. 10. It is he that giveth salvation unto kings : who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.*

In the meantime, as the Israelitish church praised Jehovah for the mercies already vouchsafed to the son of Jesse, so do we daily magnify, with voices and instruments of music, that salvation which God hath effected for us, by the deliverance of his Son, our Lord, from death and the grave.

*11. Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood : 12. That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth ; that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace. 13. That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store, that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets, or, fields : 14. That our oxen may be strong to labour ; that there be no breaking in, nor going out ; that there be no complaining in our streets.*

Prayer is again made for a continuance of God's favour, and a complete victory over every enemy; the happy consequences of which, in the establishment of Israel, and the prosperity of Jerusalem, are particularly described. Victory is productive

ce, and peace is the mother of all earthly  
 ngs to communities, and the families that  
 se them; whose happiness consisteth in a  
 rous and hopeful progeny of sons and daugh-  
 the former healthy and well nurtured, grow-  
 p, like young plants in a kindly soil, until they  
 to their full strength and stature; the latter,  
 nd virtuous, like so many tall, well-propor-  
 l, highly polished, and richly ornamented  
 ns, gracing the house to which they belong.  
 to these we have added 'plenty of corn, and  
 her provisions, in the granaries and store-  
 s; flocks and herds, ever thriving and in-  
 ng; freedom from hostile invasions and do-  
 complaints, so that there be 'no breaking  
 r going out,' no irruption of aliens into the  
 onwealth, nor emigration of inhabitants to  
 n countries, by captivity, or otherwise; we  
 find ourselves possessed of most of the ingre-  
 , which enter into the composition of tem-  
 felicity. Such felicity God promised to his  
 e Israel, and bestowed on them, while they  
 his statutes, and observed his laws. And  
 ore there is no reason for supposing, as the  
 s, with many others, have done, that these  
 s for 'sons, daughters, corn, sheep, oxen,  
 re uttered by the 'strange children,' the aliens  
 lolaters mentioned in the eleventh verse. The  
 things of this world may fall to the lot of the  
 ous, who are distinguished from the wicked  
 e use which they make of them, when given;  
 y their meek resignation of them, when taken

Whatever be the will of God concerning  
 aving or wanting these outward comforts, we  
 that we have, as the faithful servants of God

in every age had before us, greater and more precious promises, a better and an enduring substance, pleasures that fade not, and riches that fly not away, reserved for us in a heavenly country, and a city which hath foundations.

16. *Happy* is that *people that is in such a case* yea, *happy* is that *people whose God is the Lord*.

The Psalmist concludes with pronouncing the happiness of the Israelites, when in the state of prosperity above described, and their far greater happiness in 'having Jehovah for their God,' who by settling them in peaceful possession of the land of Canaan, and the Jerusalem below, gave them pledge and foretaste of that love, which stood engaged by covenant to bring them and us to his everlasting rest, in the Jerusalem above.

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### PSALM CXLV.

**ARGUMENT.**—Hitherto, in this divine book, we have been presented with checkered scenes of danger and deliverance, distress and mercy. The voice of complaint hath sometimes been succeeded by that of thanksgiving; and praise, at other times, hath terminated in prayer. But now, as if the days of mourning in Zion were ended, we hear no more of Messiah, as a man of sorrows; or of the church, as despised and afflicted, after the same example in the world. Henceforth we seem not to be upon earth, but in heaven, mingling with celestial spirits around the throne, and singing, as in the following Psalm, 1, 2. the praises of our God and King; 3. extolling, 3. his greatness, 4. his might, 5. his glory, 6, 7. his justice, 8, 9. his mercy; 10—13. the majesty of his kingdom, and, 14—21. all his adorable perfections, and wondrous works. This is an alphabetical Psalm. The verse, which

should begin with the letter Nun, is wanting. But, as Dr. Hammond hath observed, it is not uncommon for one letter, or more, to be left out in an alphabetical Psalm, as in Psalm. xxv. where  $\gamma$  being twice repeated,  $p$  is certainly omitted. We shall therefore content ourselves, with what we find in the original Hebrew, and in the Chaldee, without inserting the verse which is now read in the LXX. and other translations. Bishop Patrick mentions a saying of the ancient Hebrews, taken notice of by Valentine Schindler, that "He could not fail to be a child of the world to come, who would say this Psalm three times every day." Perhaps they who, while they chant it in full choir, enter thoroughly into the spirit of it, do experience as lively a foretaste of the next world, as can be experienced in this.

*1. I will extol thee, my God, O King; and will bless thy name for ever and ever. 2. Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.*

The same divine person, who was, in a peculiar manner, the 'God' and 'King' of Israel, now standeth in those relations to the Gentile Christian church, and by her is 'extolled' in the words of this Psalm, originally composed and used for that purpose among the Israelites. Christ is our 'God,' who hath saved us according to his covenant and promise; he is our 'King,' who hath set up the universal and everlasting kingdom foretold by Daniel and the other prophets; who hath 'all power in heaven and earth;' and who 'must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet and swallowed up death in victory.' In the meantime it is the daily employment of us, his redeemed subjects and servants, to chant forth the praises of his saving and glorious 'name,' with which the



church, on earth, and in heaven, will resound 'for ever and ever.'

*3. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. 4. One generation shall praise thy works unto another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.*

The 'greatness' of Jehovah, whether we consider it as relating to his essence or his works, is never to be fully comprehended by his saints, whose delight it is to contemplate 'the breadth, and length, and depth, and height,' Ephes. iii. 18, the extent and duration of his being and his kingdom, the profundity of his counsels, and the sublimity of his power and glory. These are the inexhaustible subjects of divine meditation, transmitted from age to age. And as the greatness of God our Saviour hath no bounds, so his praises should have no end, nor should the voice of thanksgiving ever cease in the church. As 'one generation' drops it, 'another' should take it up, and prolong the delightful strain, till the sun and the moon shall withdraw their light, and the stars fall extinguished from their orbs.

*5. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. 6. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. 7. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.*

Those works of God, which demand to be celebrated by the tongues of men, are here divided into three kinds. First, such as declare his glory and

excite our admiration whenever we behold them. Of this sort are the shining frame of the heavens, and all the bodies which move therein ; the earth, with its furniture without, and its contents within ; the magnificent and stupendous ocean, which flows around it ; the different tribes of animals inhabiting both the one and the other ; and, above all, the construction of man, the lord of this lower world. Under the second class of God's works are ranged all those which the Psalmist styleth his ' terrible acts,' or the exertions of his power against his enemies ; such as, the destruction of the old world by water ; of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire ; Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea ; of the Canaanitish nations by the sword ; and the victory gained over sin and death by the resurrection of Christ. In the third rank stand those works which have proceeded from the ' goodness' of God, and his ' righteousness' in the performance of his promises. And among these we may reckon all the different species of provision, which have been made by providence for the bodies of men in the world, and by grace for their souls in the church. On any of these subjects meditation cannot be long employed, without breaking forth into wonder, gratitude, and praise.

8. *The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.* 9. *The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

Mercy hath misery for its object, and is that attribute towards which the eyes of a fallen world must naturally be turned. The Psalmist hath accordingly, introduced her last, with great pomp

and splendour, seated in her triumphal chariot, and invested with a supremacy over all the works of God. She is above the heavens, and over all the earth, so that the whole creation findeth that refuge under the shadow of her wings, of which, by reason of man's transgression, it standeth in need. The original word for 'his tender mercies,' is רַחֲמֵי, the singular of which, רַחַם, signifies the 'womb.' The 'mercies of God towards men are, therefore, represented, by this word, to be like those of a mother towards the child of her 'womb.' And this is the very similitude which he himself hath made use of, in that most affecting and comforting passage of the prophecy of Isaiah, chap. xlix. 15; 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.'—And now what follows? Are such 'tender mercies' in God? And are they 'over all his works?' Why then,

10. *All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee.* 11. *They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;* 12. *To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.* 13. *Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.*

As 'all the works' of God, in their several ways, make a due return for the mercy vouchsafed unto them, and set forth his glory; so more especially ought this to be done by man, who is the principal party concerned in the fall and redemption. The 'saints' are the subjects of Messiah's kingdom; and of that kingdom it is their duty to publish to

the world the blessings and the glories, to the end that, when these are made known, the nations may be thereby induced to submit their hearts to so gracious a sceptre, and the dominion of Christ may become as universal in its extent, as it is everlasting in its duration.

14. *The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.*

After having proclaimed the glory and eternity of the kingdom, the prophet draws a character of the King, who, in the execution of his regal and pastoral office, is ever mindful of the necessities of his subjects. To those who, like Peter on the water, are sinking under temptation, he stretcheth out his saving arm, supporting and ‘upholding’ them by his grace; and to those who, like the woman in the gospel, have long been ‘bowed down’ with sin or sorrow, he holdeth forth a pardon, ‘raising’ and setting them upright again by his mercy. The case is the same with regard to outward distresses, from which God either preserves or delivers his people, as he sees best for them.

15. *The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.* 16. *Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.*

What a just and beautiful picture is here presented to view! We see the whole animal world assembled before us, with their eyes fixed on the great King and Father of all things, like those of a flock on their shepherd, when he enters the field, in time of dearth, with provender for them. From the same divine person as the Saviour of men, as

the King, Father, and Pastor of the church, do believers, with earnest expectation, wait for the food of eternal life. And neither one nor the other look and wait in vain. To both he giveth their meat in due season ; ' he openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing.'

17. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy, or, good, merciful, in all his works.*

Thus, ' in all his ways,' or dispensations towards his creatures, whether in nature or in grace, ' Jehovah is righteous,' faithful, and just, in extending his promised care, by making due provision for their wants ; and ' all his works,' which, from the beginning of the world, he hath wrought in behalf of the sons of men, are full of ' mercy and loving kindness.

18. *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.* 19. *He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him : he also will hear their cry, and will save them.*

It is our happiness to have a King, who is not, like earthly princes, difficult of access, but one of whom the meanest subject may at any time obtain an audience, and be certain of having his request granted, if it be made ' in truth,' without wavering, and without hypocrisy, with humble confidence, and with unwearied constancy, expecting salvation from God, from none but him, and from him only in the way of duty and obedience : ' he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him.'

20. *The Lord preserveth all them that love him : but all the wicked will he destroy.*

To protect his subjects, and destroy their enemies, is the finishing part of the regal character, as here drawn from its great original in 'the King of saints.' By his grace he now preserveth us from innumerable dangers and temptations, and gradually destroyeth sin in us: and by his power he will hereafter execute, in the fullest and most extensive sense, this part of his office, 'when the wicked shall be consumed with the spirit of his mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his coming.' Then the bodies of the righteous, preserved to a joyful resurrection, shall be reunited to their souls, and both together, perfected and glorified, shall reign and shine with him for ever. 'Thus the Lord Jesus Christ 'preserveth all that love him,' and maketh good his promise, Their shall not an hair of your head perish.' Luke, xxi. 18.

21. *My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord : and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.*

The Psalmist, having now given the reasons why he had resolved to 'extol his God and King, and to bless his name for ever and ever,' concludes with repeating his resolution, and exhorts all the world to follow his example, in time and eternity.

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### PSALM CXLVI.

ARGUMENT.—In this Psalm, the church is taught, 1, 2. to prolong the praises of Jehovah, as her God and King; 3—6. to beware of trusting in the powers of the world, and to rely on the world's Creator and Redeemer, whose miracles of love

and mercy, wrought for the children of men, 7, 9. are enumerated, and the eternity of whose kingdom, 10. is proclaimed.

1. *Praise ye the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul.* 2. *While I live will I praise the Lord : I will sing praises unto my God, while I have any being.*

No sooner is one hallelujah ended, but another begins ; and the prophet, in imitation of those who 'rest not day nor night,' stirs himself up afresh to praise the King of glory, the Creator and Redeemer of men, declaring himself resolved to employ the powers and faculties of his soul in the service of that God, who gave and preserved them.

3. *Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.* 4. *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth ; in that very day his thoughts perish.* 5. *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God ;* 6. *Which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is : which keepeth truth for ever :*

From Him, who is 'the prince of the kings of the earth,' Sion looks for deliverance, and by Him her true sons expect to be exalted. He 'keepeth truth for ever ;' he is able and willing to perform his promises, and never disappoints those who rely on him. There are no changes in the politics of heaven. The faithful servant of his Master is by that Master infallibly approved and rewarded. Earthly princes, if they have the will, often want the power, even to protect their friends. And should they want neither will nor power to advance them, yet still all depends upon the breath in their nostrils, which, perhaps, at the very critical moment, 'goeth forth ; they return to their earth ; then

thoughts,' and all the thoughts of those who had hoped to rise by their means, fall into the same grave, and are buried with them for ever. 'Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of? But trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.' Isa. ii. 22; xxvi. 4.

*7. Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The Lord looseth the prisoners: 8. The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous: 9. The Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.*

That the Lord, of whom all these things are spoken, is the Messiah, or Jehovah incarnate, appears, as Dr. Hammond hath justly observed, from what is said of him in verse 8. 'The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind;' the miracle of restoring sight to men born blind being one reserved for the Son of God to work, at his coming in the flesh. 'Since the world began,' saith the man to whom sight had been thus restored, 'was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.' John, ix. 32. This therefore was the first of those tokens given by Jesus to the disciples of John, whereby it might be known, that he was the expected Christ; 'Go and tell John the things which ye have heard and seen; the blind receive their sight,' &c. But how did this evince him to be the Messiah? Plainly, because it had been foretold by the prophets, (as in Isaiah, xxxv. 5, xxix. 18, xlii. 18, so in this passage of our Psalm, *which is exactly similar to those texts,*) that Mes-



siah, when he came, should give sight to the blind. Now, if one part of the Psalmist's description belong to Christ, the other members of it must do so likewise, it being evident that the whole is spoken of the same person. He, therefore, is 'the God of Jacob, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that therein is;' and, upon his appearing among men in the body of our flesh, he showed himself possessed of power to relieve all the wants, corporal and spiritual, of poor lost mankind. When he rescued men from the bondage of Satan, he 'executed judgment for the oppressed:' when he fed thousands by a miracle, or when he preached the word to such as desired to hear and receive it, he 'gave food to the hungry:' when, by pardon and grace, he released those who were bound with the chains of their sins, he 'loosed the prisoners:' when he poured light into the sightless eye-ball, or illuminated with saving knowledge the understanding of the ignorant, he 'opened the eyes of the blind:' when he made the crooked woman straight, or rectified the obliquity of a depraved will, he 'raised those that were bowed down:' while he protecteth, and guideth to the city of their eternal habitation, the sons of Adam, who are exiles, pilgrims, and sojourners upon earth, he 'preserveth the strangers;' when he became a husband to the church, and a parent to her destitute children, he 'relieved the fatherless and widow:' and when he shall come in his glorious majesty, to reward his servants, and to confound their enemies, it will be seen how 'he loveth the righteous, and turneth the way of the wicked upside down.' Happy the people of such a God; happy the subjects of such a King! Rejoice, and sing, and shout aloud; for lo,

10. *The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the Lord.*

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*Thirtieth Day.—Evening Prayer.*

PSALM CXLVII.

ARGUMENT.—It hath been conjectured from ver. 2. that this Psalm was written to celebrate the return of Israel from Babylon, when Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt. 1—3. The people of God are exhorted to praise him for the mercies vouchsafed to them; 4—6. for his wisdom, power, and goodness; 7—9. for his providential care, and, 10, 11. the wonderful salvation wrought by his arm; 12—14. for the security, increase, and prosperity of the church; 15—18. for the happy change of her condition, like that produced in nature, when spring succeeds to winter; 19, 20. and for the glorious privilege of the divine word, revealed and committed to her.

1. *Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.*

Praise is 'good' and acceptable to God our Saviour, whose glory is the great end of man's creation and redemption: and it is 'pleasant and comely' for man, being the only return he can make for those, and all other mercies; the offspring of gratitude, and the expression of love; the elevation of the soul, and the antepast of heaven; its own reward in this life, and an introduction to the felicities of the next.

2. *The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.*

If this Psalm were written on occasion of the return from Babylon, and the rebuilding of the

earthly city, the ideas are to be transferred, as in other Psalms of the same kind, to a more important restoration from a much worse captivity, and to the building up of the church under the gospel, when Christ 'gathered together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad;' John, xi. 52; that is, in the words of our Psalm, he 'gathered together the outcasts of Israel!' So shall he again, at the resurrection, 'gather together his elect from the four winds,' Matt. xxiv. 31, and 'build up a Jerusalem,' in which they shall serve and praise him for ever.

*3. He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.*

The 'broken hearts and wounded spirits' of the Israelites were 'healed and made whole,' when they returned to their own land, when they beheld Jerusalem rising again in beauteous majesty, and sung the songs of Zion in the courts of the temple. Thus Christ came to 'preach deliverance to the captives, and to bind up the broken-hearted;' Isa. lxi. 1; Luke, iv. 18; to speak pardon and peace to the wounded and contrite spirit, and to put a new song of thanksgiving in the mouth of the penitent, which he might sing, when restored to the holy city, and the house of his heavenly Father. The hour is coming, when God shall heal the breaches which death has made in the bodies of his people, and translate them likewise from Babylon to Jerusalem.

*4. He telleth the number of the stars: he calleth them all by their names.*

And he who does this, cannot be ignorant of the

situation and circumstances of his elect. He knoweth each individual, and numbereth all the atoms which go to the composition of his frame. He can call his saints from the depths of earth and sea, 'by their names,' as when once 'he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth;' and he can fix them in radiant circles round his throne in the kingdom of glory, vying, for multitude, as well as splendour, with those bright orbs which glitter by night in the spangled firmament of heaven; so that what Baruch saith of the stars, may well be applied to the seed of Abraham, of whom it was foretold, that they should equal the stars in number. Gen. xv. 5. 'The stars shine in their watches, and rejoice; when he calleth them, they say, Here we be; and so with cheerfulness they show light unto him that made them.' Baruch, iii. 34.

5. *Great is our Lord and of great power: his understanding is infinite: Heb. of his understanding there is no number, or, computation; אין מספר.*

This is a proper conclusion drawn from the former part of the Psalm, and especially from the preceding verse. The greatness of God's power, which overcometh all difficulties to effect the salvation of his people, is not to be grasped by the human mind; and that wisdom which numbers the stars of heaven, and the sand of the sea, and the generations of the sons of Abraham, can itself be subject to the rules of no arithmetic.

6. *The Lord lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.*

To exalt and reward the humble, penitent, believing, and obedient; to depress and punish the

proud, impenitent, unbelieving, and disobedient; these are the measures and ends of all the divine dispensations. And as a man ranks himself in one or other of these two divisions, he may expect from heaven storm or sunshine, mercy or judgment.

*7. Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God. 8. Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. 9. He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.*

The faithful praise God for his goodness to the animal world, both on account of that goodness in itself, and also because they behold therein an emblem and assurance of his mercy to themselves. The watchful care of Providence over all creatures, speaks the same language to us which Jehovah made use of to Joshua, and which the apostle hath applied to Christians: 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Josh. i. 5; Heb. xiii. 5. He who, by sending rain on the mountains, which could not otherwise be watered, provideth food for the wild beasts inhabiting those mountains, will never leave the lambs of his flock destitute. And he who feedeth the young of the unclean raven, when they cry, and, as it were, in their way, call upon him for a supply of their wants, will he, in the day of dearth and calamity, forsake the meek and harmless dove, that mourneth continually in prayer before him? The desponding servant of God need only therefore put to himself the question which we find asked by the Creator, in the book of Job, chap. xxxviii. 41: 'Who provideth for the raven

his food? When his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat; they wander and find it. Our Lord pressed this argument on his disciples; Luke, xii. 24: 'Consider the ravens:' Matt. vi. 26: 'Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?'

Behold, and look away your low despair;  
 See the light tenants of the barren air:  
 To them, nor stores, nor granaries belong,  
 Nought but the woodland, and the pleasing song;  
 Yet, your kind heav'nly Father bends his eye  
 On the least wing that flits along the sky.  
 To him they sing when spring renews the plain,  
 To him they cry, in winter's pinching reign;  
 Nor is their music, nor their plaint, in vain:  
 He hears the gay, and the distressful call,  
 And with unsparing bounty fills them all.  
 Will he not care for you, ye faithless, say?  
 Is he unwise? Or, are ye less than they?

THOMSON.

10. *He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.* 11. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.*

If, therefore, the inference deduced above be a just one, namely, that God, who takes care of the wild beasts, and the birds of the air, will support and defend his church; then, however weak she may be, and however strong her adversaries may be, yet she may rest secure, as having him on her side, to whom it is equal, to save by many, or by few; who giveth not the victory to the pomp and pride of carnal strength, to thousands or ten thou-

sands, but to 'those who fear him, and hope in his mercy.' The history of Israel is one continual exemplification of this truth; and, in our spiritual warfare, 'this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith.' 1 John, v. 4.

*12. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. 13. For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee. 14. He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.*

The church, like Jerusalem of old, erected and preserved by the wisdom, and power, and goodness of God, is exhorted to praise him for all the benefits and blessings vouchsafed unto her; for the increase of 'her children within her;' for the 'peace which she at any time enjoyeth 'in her borders,' while she is here below; for the plentiful provision made by her pastors, to satisfy the needs of those who 'hunger and thirst after righteousness;' and for the protection of the Almighty, 'strengthening the bars of her gates,' and securing to her the possession of all these comforts; which, in the heavenly Jerusalem, shall be rendered perfect and indefeasible for evermore.

*15. He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly. 16. He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. 17. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold? 18. He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.*

The wonders of nature represent to us the miracles of grace; and the change of seasons produceth

not greater alterations in the world, than those which take place in the church, when her God hideth from her, or restoreth to her, the light of his countenance, which, like its emblem, the bright ruler in the heavens, at its departure leaves winter behind it; and brings the spring with it at its return. "The sun," says Bishop Sherlock, "is the great spirit of the world, in the light of which all things are made to 'rejoice;' perpetual spring attends his course; all things revive at his approach, and put on a new face of youth and beauty; winter and frost lag behind him; nature grows deformed, and sickens at his departure." Discourses, vol. v. What the sun is to the world, the same is Christ to the church. When the heart of man turns away from him, and deprives itself of his gracious illumination; when ignorance succeeds to knowledge, that is, darkness to light; when faith fails, and all its fair productions wither away; when 'the love of many is waxen cold,' and the fertilizing streams of charity are frozen to the bottom. On the other hand, when God 'sendeth out his word, and melteth them;' when he 'bloweth with his spirit, and,' by these genial influences from above, 'the waters are made to flow;' when faith revives, and shoots into vigour, and beauty, and fruitfulness; and when the hearts of men are warmed, as well as their understandings illuminated: what is all this, but a winter, and a spring, like those which, in their turns, annually deform and renew the face of the earth, at the 'word and command of God,' in either case, 'running swiftly,' and operating efficaciously?

19. *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes*



*and his judgments unto Israel. 20. He hath not dealt so with any nation : and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.*

That 'word,' the effects of which upon the spiritual system are similar to those experienced by nature in the vernal season, that 'word was showed unto Jacob,' and became the property of 'Israel,' while Israel continued to be the church of God. It hath since been made over, with all its types realized and its prophecies accomplished in Jesus, to the church Christian ; it is that peculiar blessing, which distinguishes her from the rest of the world, and for which her children are bound, at all times to 'praise the Lord.'

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### PSALM CXLVIII.

ARGUMENT.—All the creatures in the invisible and visible world are called upon by the Psalmist to unite in a grand chorus of praise and thanksgiving. The various parts are to be performed by, 1, 2. the angelic hosts ; 3—6. the material heavens, and the luminaries placed in them ; 7. the ocean, with its inhabitants ; 8. the meteors of the air ; 9. 10. the earth, as divided into hills and valleys, with the vegetables that grow out of it ; 11—13. the human race of every degree, of each sex, and of every age ; 14. more especially the Israel, or church of God.

1. *Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens : praise him in the heights.*
2. *Praise ye him, all ye angels ; praise ye him all his hosts.*

When St. John saw in vision the King of glory seated on his throne, he tells us that he heard all the angels which stood around the throne, with the

elders, and every creature in heaven, earth, and sea, lifting up their voices, and singing together a hymn of thanksgiving in honour of him. Such a choir we find here summoned by the inspired Psalmist, and exhorted to join and assist him in praising the same Divine Person, whom the elders, in the Revelation, declare 'worthy to receive glory, and honour, and power,' because he 'created all things, and for his pleasure they are and were created : ' Rev. v. 13 ; iv. 11. From the heavens and those unutterable heights, where hosts of immortal spirits, admitted to a sight of their King, enjoy unfading pleasures, the song is to begin. And when the strain is thus set by the celestial part of the choir, it is to be taken up, and echoed back, by the creatures of this lower world, animate and inanimate, which have all their several parts assigned them, in the great work of glorifying their Creator.

*3. Praise ye him sun and moon : praise him, all ye stars of light. 4. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. 5. Let them praise the name of the Lord : for he commanded, and they were created. 6. He hath also established them for ever and ever : he hath made a decree which shall not pass.*

The material heavens, through all their various regions, with the luminaries placed in them, and the waters sustained by them, though they have neither speech nor language, and want the tongue of men, yet by their splendour and magnificence, their motions and their influences, all regulated and exerted according to the ordinance of their Maker, do, in a very intelligible and striking manner, de-

clare the glory of God ; they call upon us to translate their actions into our language, and copy their obedience in our lives ; that so we may, both by word and deed, glorify, with them, the Creator and Redeemer of the universe.

*7. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, or, whales, and all deeps :*

From heaven above, the Psalmist descendeth to the deep beneath, which, while it proclaims the power, observes the laws and decrees, of him who made it, and poured it abroad. And the same may be said of its enormous inhabitants, which are under the command of Jehovah, and of none but him.

*8. Fire and hail ; snow and vapours ; stormy wind, fulfilling his word :*

These are so many 'messengers always ready to go forth, at the command of the Most High, for the purposes of mercy or judgment. They praise and glorify God after their manner, while they ' fulfil his word ' upon the earth.

*9. Mountains, and all hills ; fruitful trees, and all cedars : 10. Beasts, and all cattle ; creeping things, and flying fowl :*

Who shall ever understand and comprehend all the wisdom of God displayed in the vegetable world, from the cedar to the hyssop ; in the animal, from the elephant to the pismire, from the eagle to the sparrow ? The more we study them, the more we shall find him glorified in them ; and the more, on that account, will he be glorified by us.

11. *Kings of the earth, and all people; princes and all the judges of the earth: 12. Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: 13. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.*<sup>1</sup>

After the whole creation hath been called upon to praise Jehovah; man, for whom the whole was made; man, the last and more perfect work of God; man, that hath been since redeemed by the blood of the Son of God incarnate, is exhorted to join and fill up the universal chorus of heaven and earth, as being connected with both worlds, that which now is, and that which is to come. Persons of every degree, of each sex, and of every age; 'kings,' whose power God hath made an image of his own, and who are the suns of their respective systems; 'judges,' and magistrates of all kinds, who derive their power, as the moon and planets do their light, from its original source; 'young men and maidens,' in the flower of health, strength, and beauty; 'old men,' who have accomplished their warfare, and are going out of life; 'children,' who are just come into it, and see every thing new before them; all these have their several reasons for 'praising the Lord, whose name is excellent, and his glory above heaven and earth.'

14. *He also exalteth the horn of his people, the*

<sup>1</sup> Nec ad solos Hebræos hæc pertinet adhortatio, sed ad omnes omnino homines: estque adeo veluti prologium vocationis Gentilium. Deum enim laudare, ut par est, non possunt, qui eum non bene nōrunt; nec eum satis nōrunt, qui Evangelium nunquam audiverunt; e quo maximæ Dei laudes efflorescunt Clericus in loc.

*praise of all his saints, even of the children of Israel,  
a people near unto him. Praise ye the Lord.*

As men, above all other creatures, so, above other men, the 'Israel' of God, the 'people' that are admitted to draw 'near unto him,' in his house, by faith and charity, by prayer and participation of the sacraments, are bound to praise him, who now 'exalteth' them from sin to righteousness, and will hereafter exalt them from dust to glory.

Since few of my readers may, perhaps, have met with a paraphrase on the foregoing Psalm, that has hitherto, I believe, only made its appearance in a periodical publication or two, I shall take the liberty to subjoin it, as a piece, which cannot but be acceptable to all true lovers of sacred poetry. It was written, as I have been lately informed, by the learned and ingenious Dr. Ogilvie, at sixteen years of age.

## 1.

Begin, my soul, th' exalted lay,  
Let each enraptur'd thought obey,  
And praise the Almighty's name.  
Lo! heaven and earth, and seas and skies,  
In one melodious concert rise,  
To swell th' inspiring theme.

## 2.

Ye fields of light, celestial plains,  
Where gay transporting beauty reigns,  
Ye scenes divinely fair,  
Your Maker's wondrous power proclaim,  
Tell how he form'd your shining frame,  
And breath'd the fluid air.

## 3.

Ye angels, catch the thrilling sound ;  
While all th' adoring thrones around  
His boundless mercy sing ;  
Let every listening saint above  
Wake all the tuneful soul of love,  
And touch the sweetest string.

## 4.

Join, ye loud spheres, the vocal choir ;  
Thou, dazzling orb of liquid fire,  
The mighty chorus aid :  
Soon as grey evening gilds the plain,  
Thou, moon, protract the melting strain,  
And praise him in the shade.

## 5.

Thou heaven of heavens, his vast abode ;  
Ye clouds, proclaim your forming God,  
Who call'd yon worlds from night :  
'Ye shades, dispel !'—th' Eternal said ;  
At once th' involving darkness fled,  
And nature sprung to light.

## 6.

Whate'er a blooming world contains,  
That wings the air, that skims the plains,  
United praise bestow :  
Ye dragons, sound his awful name  
To heaven aloud ; and roar acclaim,  
Ye swelling deeps below.

## 7.

Let every element rejoice :  
Ye thunders, burst with awful voice  
To him who bids you roll :  
His praise in softer notes declare,  
Each whisp'ring breeze of yielding air,  
And breathe it to the soul.

## 8.

To him, ye graceful cedars, bow ;  
Ye tow'ring mountains, bending low,  
Your great Creator own :  
Tell, when affrighted nature shook,  
How Sinai kindled at his look,  
And trembled at his frown.

## 9.

Ye flocks that haunt the humble vale,  
Ye insects flutt'ring on the gale,  
In mutual concourse rise ;  
Crop the gay rose's vermeil bloom,  
And waft its spoils, a sweet perfume,  
In incense to the skies.

## 10.

Wake, all ye mountain tribes, and sing ;  
Ye plummy warblers of the spring,  
Harmonious anthems raise  
To him who shap'd your finer mould,  
Who tipp'd your glitt'ring wings with gold,  
And tun'd your voice to praise.

## 11.

Let man, by nobler passions sway'd,  
The feeling heart, the judging head,  
In heav'nly praise employ;  
Spread his tremendous name around,  
Till heav'n's broad arch rings back the sound,  
The gen'ral burst of joy.

## 12.

Ye whom the charms of grandeur please,  
Nurs'd on the downy lap of ease,  
Fall prostrate at his throne;  
Ye princes, rulers, all adore;  
Praise him, ye kings, who makes your pow'r  
An image of his own.

## 13.

Ye fair, by nature form'd to move,  
O praise th' eternal source of love,  
With youth's enliv'ning fire:  
Let age take up the tuneful lay,  
Sigh his bless'd name—then soar away,  
And ask an angel's lyre.

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PSALM CXLIX.

ARGUMENT.—The children of Zion are excited, 1—3. to rejoice, and sing the praises of their King, on account, 4. of the salvation which he has already wrought for them, and which will hereafter be completed in them, when, 5. they shall enter into his rest, and, 6—9. triumph with him over the persecuting powers of the world, and all the opposers of Christ, on whom will then be executed the judgment written.



The Jews, mistaking, as usual, the time, place, and nature of Messiah's glorious kingdom, imagine this Psalm will receive its accomplishment, by their being made rulers of the nations, and lords of all things here below.

1. *Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.* 2. *Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.* 3. *Let them praise his name in the dance; let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.*

Christians are now the people to whom belong the names and characters of 'saints, Israel, and children of Zion.' They 'sing' this holy 'song,' as the Psalmist hath enjoined them to do. They sing it 'new' in its evangelical sense, as new men, celebrating new victories, new and greater mercies, a spiritual salvation, an eternal redemption. They 'rejoice,' with hearts, voices, instruments, and every other token of joy, 'in him who hath made,' or created them again, in righteousness and true holiness; they are 'joyful in their King,' who hath himself overcome, and is now leading them on to final conquest and triumph, to honour and immortality.

4. *For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.* 5. *The saints' shall be joyful with glory: they shall sing aloud upon their beds, or, places of rest.*

Such 'pleasure' the King of Zion taketh in his people, that he hath not disdained to become like one of them; to partake of their flesh and blood,

<sup>1</sup> In this verse the Hebrew verbs are in the future time. In the verse following, the original hath no verb at all. The liberty is therefore taken to render them accordingly.

and to give them his Spirit ; he was made man, to purchase them by his death ; and as a man, he is gone into heaven, to prepare a place for them. From thence he will return, to ‘ beautify the meek with salvation,’ and place on the heads of his true disciples, the lowly, patient, and peaceable ones, a bright and incorruptible crown. Therefore are ‘ the saints joyful in glory ; they sing aloud,’ in a state of perfect ease and security, resting from their labours, but not from their hallelujahs.

*6. The high praises of God in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand ; 7. To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people : 8. To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron ; 9. To execute upon them the judgment written : this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord.*

To those who are saints indeed, and who are acquainted with the genuine spirit of the gospel, how obvious is it, that the scene, of which we have here a prophetic exhibition, is one that cannot take place till after the resurrection, because the followers of the Lamb have certainly nothing to do with vengeance in this world, though they are to judge, not only men but angels, in the next, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3 ; when they shall be called up to sit on thrones, as assessors, at the condemnation of their once-insulting persecutors, who will be cut asunder with the ‘ two-edged sword,’ and bound with indissoluble chains.’ Thus will be executed upon them the eternal ‘ judgment written’ and announced against the enemies of Messiah, in the Scriptures of truth. ‘ This honour will all his saints then have.’

## PSALM CL.

ARGUMENT.—The Psalmist exhorteth men to praise Jehovah, 1. for his holiness, and the firmament of his power, 2. for the wonders of his might, and for his excellent greatness, 3—5. with all kinds of music. 6. He concludeth his divine book of praises, by calling upon every thing that hath breath, to employ that breath in declaring the glory of him who gave it.

1. *Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary, or, for his holiness; praise him in, or, for the firmament, or, expansion, of his power.*

If our translation be retained, the meaning is, that God should be praised in the 'sanctuary,' or temple below, and likewise in 'heaven' above; the former being planned and constructed as a resemblance of the latter. But the context rather, perhaps, requires us to suppose the Psalmist giving the reasons why God should be praised; namely, on account of his 'holiness,' and of his 'power,' which power is more especially displayed in the formation of the 'firmament,' or 'expansion' of the material heavens, and their incessant operations, by means of the light and the air of which they are composed, upon the earth and all things therein. These are the appointed instruments of life and motion in the natural world, and they afford us some idea of that power of God unto salvation which is manifested in the church, by the effects produced on the souls of men, through the gracious influences of the light divine and the spirit of holiness, constituting the 'firmament of God's power' in the new creation.

2. *Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.*

'Mighty' were the 'acts' which God wrought for Israel, and 'great' was the Holy One in the midst of his ancient people; but far mightier acts did he perform in Christ Jesus, for the redemption of the world; and more excellent 'greatness' hath he manifested in the conversion of the nations, the overthrow of paganism, and the erection and preservation of the Christian church. O that her gratitude bore some proportion to his goodness!

*3. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet; praise him with the psaltery and harp. 4. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. 5. Praise him upon the loud cymbals; praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals.*

It is impossible for us to distinguish and describe the several sorts of musical instruments here mentioned, as the Hebrews themselves acknowledge their ignorance in this particular. Thus much is clear, that the people of God are enjoined to use all the various kinds of them, in the performance of their divine services. And why should they not be so used under the gospel? We read of sacred music before the law, in the instance of 'Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron,' who, to celebrate the deliverance from Pharaoh and the Egyptians, 'took a timbrel in her hand, and the women went out after her, with timbrels and dances:' Exod. xv. 20. The custom, therefore, was not introduced by the law, nor abolished with it. Well regulated music, if ever it had the power of calming the passions, if ever it enlivened and exalted the affections of men in the worship of God (pur-

poses for which it was formerly employed,) doubtless hath still the same power, and can still afford the same aids to devotion. When the beloved disciple was, in spirit, admitted into the celestial choir, he not only heard them 'singing' hymns of praise, but he heard likewise 'the voice of harpers harping upon their harps.' Rev. xiv. 2. And why that, which saints are represented as doing in heaven, should not be done, according to their skill and ability, by saints upon earth; or why instrumental music should be abolished as a legal ceremony, and vocal music, which was as much so, should be retained, no good reason can be assigned. Sacred music, under proper regulations, removes the hinderances of our devotion, cures the distractions of our thoughts, and banishes weariness from our minds. It adds solemnity to the public service, raises all the devout passions in the soul, and causes our duty to become our delight. "Of the pleasure of heaven," says the eloquent and elegant Bishop Atterbury, "nothing further is revealed to us, than that they consist in the practice of holy music, and holy love; the joint enjoyment of which, we are told, is to be the happy lot of all pious souls, to endless ages." It may be added, that there is no better method of combating the mischievous effects flowing from the abuse of music, than by applying it to its true and proper use. If the worshippers of Baal join in a chorus to celebrate the praises of their idol, the servants of Jehovah should drown it, by one that is stronger and more powerful, in praise of him who made heaven and earth. If the men of the world rejoice in the object of their adoration, let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

6. *Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.*

The breath of natural life, which God hath breathed into our nostrils, and the breath of that new and eternal life, which he hath given us through Christ Jesus our Lord, should be returned in hallelujahs. And then the church, composed of many and different members, all actuated like the pipes of a well-tuned organ, by the same spirit, and conspiring together in perfect harmony, would become one great instrument sounding forth the praises of God most high.

Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord! With this wish the sweet Psalmist of Israel closes the songs of Zion. With the same wish the author desires to close these meditations upon them; giving thanks to the Father of mercies, and the God of all comforts, by whose most gracious favour and aid they have been begun, continued, and ended; and humbly praying, that no errors, or improprieties, from which, through human infirmity, during the course of a long work, the most diligent and careful are not exempt, may prevent his labours from contributing, in some small degree, to promote the improvement and consolation of the redeemed, the honour and glory of the Redeemer, who is 'the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.'<sup>1</sup> Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xxii. 16.

THE END.

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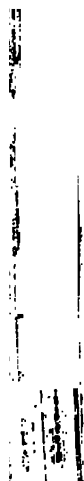
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